AN

HUMBLE ATTEMPT

TO DEFEND

THE BIBLE

AGAINST

THE ASPERSIONS

OF

MR PAINE,

IN HIS SECOND PART OF

THE AGE OF REASON,

BY

A. SUTER.

Suffer me a little, and I will ſhew thee that I have to ſpeak on God's behalf.—ELIHU.

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PREFACE.

WHEN I firſt began theſe Remarks on the ſecond Part of the *Age of Reaſon*, I knew not that any anſwer had been written to it, but I now underſtand there are ſeveral, though I have ſeen none of them. Had I known *that*, I ſhould hardly have attempted any thing of the kind; and nothing would have induced me to go forward with this, and to lay it before the public, but the hopes of doing a little good.

As near as I could, I have kept to Bible-evidence as Mr PAINE bound himſelf to do, and promiſed by the Bible *only* to overturn the Bible; I therefore thought of doing it equal juſtice in bringing it to ſupport itſelf.

I have touched upon the moſt material objections advanced by Mr Paine, how I have ſucceeded in anſwering them, and removing the ſeeming contradictions he takes notice of, and confirming the truth of the bible, I ſhall leave the candid to determine.

A. S.

ERRATA.

I beg the indulgence of the reader to correct the following, and any other, miſtakes.

page	*line*	
7	23	for beſt *read* as well
10	14	--- approbrious —— opprobrious
—	29	--- third —— firſt
12	7	--- Deteronomy —— Deuteronomy
14	4	--- evils now exiſting —— other evils
15	18	--- irrevently —— irreverently
20	24	--- gentlemen —— gentleman
36	25	--- Deſty —— Deity
54	30	--- evidence —— evidences
56	31	--- vegitation —— vegetation
58	17	--- Teſtaments —— Teſtament
60	40	--- irradicate —— eradicate
61	22	--- Deliver —— Deliverer

AN

HUMBLE ATTEMPT,

&c.

"IT has often been ſaid," ſays Mr Paine, p. 1. "that any thing may be proved from the bible," and it appears he has fully entered into the belief of this doctrine, and gone a little further, I apprehend, than few, if any, before him him ever thought of going, even to the making it a monſter to the devouring its own production — it own ſelf!

Whatever contentions ſome commentators may have had about ſome particular parts of the bible, they have generally agreed, that the pureſt truths were to be found there. It is poſſible for men to differ in their judgments about ſome things, and yet fall into an union of ſentiment in others; hence Mr P.'s former antagoniſts could "contend and wrangle" about their own opinions, but unite "in telling their readers that Thomas Paine underſtands not" the bible. Perhaps there was ſome truth in it. But he is become wiſer ſince the firſt part of his *Age of Reaſon* was publiſhed, and it is in the ſecond part that we are to diſcover it.

"Now inſtead of waſting time," ſays this gentleman, p. 2, "men *ought to know*, and if they do not, it is civility to inform them, that the firſt thing to be underſtood is, whether there is ſufficient authority for believing the bible," &c. This is kind. But in anſwer

to this, it is to be obſerved that they *do know*, and, as far as is ſatisfactory to their own minds, are *fully perſuaded* that it is "the word of God;" yet do they not decline inveſtigation, conſcious that truth appears the brighteſt and moſt agreeable, when the cloſeſt examined, and beſt known.

"There are," ſay you, ſame page, "matters in that book, ſaid to be done by *the expreſs command* of God, that are ſhocking to humanity," &c. Here Mr P. ſeems not ſo civil, but arraigns the Almighty and paſſes ſentence, pronouncing him guilty of the greateſt cruelties, and ranking him among aſſaſſins of the bloodieſt nature! However in anſwer to theſe, and all ſuch heavy charges againſt God and the bible I only deſire, and think no reaſonable deiſt can well refuſe me, the following propoſitions by which I truſt to make all the attributes of God harmonize in all the various apparently dreadful things that are affixed to him, or executed by his orders, in the bible, viz.

1. That there is a God, and that he is ſupreme over all, juſt, wiſe, and good. 2. That the earth is his workmanſhip, and at his diſpoſal. 3. That man and beaſt are his creatures, and he has an abſolute right over them. 4. That man has an immortal ſpirit, capable of being miſerable or happy here and hereafter. 5. That this is a diſordered ſtate, and that there is a better and a worſe. 6. That in thoſe ſtates, here are degrees both of happineſs and miſery. From theſe principles, and the uſe Mr Paine makes and allows, as we ſhall ſoon ſee, of the bible, I intend, with the help of heaven, to meet his arguments againſt God, his word, and ſervants.

Mr Paine proceeds, ſame page, "It is not the antiquity of a tale that is any evidence of its truth," &c. This we admit if other evidences are wanting; but that this is the caſe reſpecting the ſcriptures remains to be proved; and that the reverſe is true, will be made I truſt ſufficiently to appear. It may be ſaid of antiquity as of things in general, it has its uſes and abuſes. The bible does not plead for the errors or defects of antiquity, or written truths would never have taken place

of oral traditions; nor would the New Teſtament ever ſuperſeded that of the Old. When antiquity is called in to ſupport a bad cauſe, or to eſtabliſh dangerous principles, or claſhes with the rights of man, in a civil or religious ſenſe, it is to be deteſted, and every man ſhould proteſt againſt it. But the doctrines of the bible are of ſo equalizing a nature, and its maxims ſo full of benignity to all men, that equal violence muſt be done to force it to ſerve ſuch purpoſes, as to the mind of a rational, unprejudiced perſon, not to believe it to be of God. The antiquity of the bible is juſtly made uſe of by us in this day as a proof of the goodneſs of God to men in remote ages of the world, and to ſhew, wherein it concerns us in ſimilar things, how far an old tried friend is to be preferred to a ſuſpected ſtranger. But let us ſee with what propriety Mr P. makes uſe of the antiquity of the bible to overturn it. "The origin of every nation," ſays he, ſame page, "is buried in fabulous tradition, and that of the Jews as much ſo as any other." I never knew this before reſpecting this people, I do not believe it. Who that has read hiſtory will credit this gentleman here? On the contrary, the Jews as a nation are as well known, as to their origin, laws, government, and country; yea more ſo than any nation upon earth. And what is more, we are indebted to them for the trueſt accounts of the riſe and fall of the moſt diſtinguiſhed empires ever exiſting. But Mr P. ſets off here on wrong premiſes, and with miſtaken notions of things. Was he treating of a people, the records of whoſe country were loſt, or had never been written, what he ſays might appear to have ſome weight; but as they now ſtand, and ſtand ſo fair on the annals of time, we cannot admit of his concluſions. For, 1. Thoſe things Mr P. calls ancient, were written when *new, freſh*; yea, while ſome were living whoſe names and conduct, both good and bad, were mentioned. If this people had not believed it to be the will of God, that an hiſtory of thoſe things ſhould be made and kept, would they have ſuffered the writers, ſo much to their diſgrace, to have proceeded; giving an account of their

abject ſtate, their deliverance; and faſt following impiety and ingratitude? What nation ever ſet off before or ſince, in publiſhing its own ſhame; or hiſtorians, in declaring their own defects? A proof, an indubitable proof to me, of the authenticity of bible hiſtory.—— But further, if their poſterity, and I hope Mr P. will admit there is ſuch, had not believed the accounts to be really true, they would have found means to have deſtroyed the whole, or expunged the diſagreeable and introduced ſomething more to the credit of themſelves and progenitors. But as a further proof. 2. Firm in the belief of the ancient books of Moſes and their author, their records have been improved and enlarged after the ſame manner, where we have details of their cuſtoms, crimes, and misfortunes. Strange that from among themſelves none ever roſe to find out the cheat and diſcover the impoſtor. Nay, that even the moſt remarkable body of diſſenters amongſt them, the Sadducees, ſhould give the fulleſt credit to the five books of Moſes. 3. Many other writers have borne te ſtimony of very ancient date to the reality of Moſes and his writings. Still I admit the ſcriptures, owing to the diſtance of time, may appear in many reſpects doubtful. So, from various changes, does the hiſtory of paſt times among ourſelves, appear almoſt incredible. To all hiſtories we owe a degree of implicit faith, if we would receive the facts of paſt ages; ſhould that be denied, we may doubt every thing, and conſider ourſelves as the firſt of our own ſpecies that has been, and the laſt that will be. Who ſo capable of giving us an account of Britain nearly 2000 years ago, as Julius Cæſar? The hiſtory of the Jews commenced with the nation, and was executed by one, who, under God, was the inſtrument of raiſing it to that dignity. The lapſe of thouſands of years cannot invalidate truth; truth grows not old; truth knows no decay. What then was true in Moſes' day, muſt be true in ours as to the things of that æra. This is what Mr P. ſhould have attended to, but has not, hence is he bewildered and bewilders others, and with all this hoſt of the moſt ſatisfactory evidence that things done before

we exiſted can have, he openly declares them falſe. But what credit can ſuch a man himſelf expect? Does he think that becauſe he denies Moſes that tribute, the preſent age will the more readily pay it him? It is to be lamented we ſuffer ourſelves to be ſo eaſily deceived, and novelty is very engaging; but I truſt, after all, we are not ſo ſoon rallied out of our ſenſes, hectored out of our bibles, nor ſo eaſily bullied into a ſyſtem no ways likely to make us wiſer, happier, better men, or better citizens.

"Having premiſed theſe things," ſays Mr P. p. 5. "I proceed to examine the authenticity of the bible, and begin with what is called the five books of Moſes, *Geneſis*," &c. "My intention," adds he, "is to ſhew that thoſe books are ſpurious, and that Moſes is not the author, and that they were not written for ſeveral hundred years after the time of Moſes. The evidence I ſhall produce in this is from the books themſelves. I will confine myſelf to this evidence only." &c. Moſt proper, and what we wiſh; we deſire nothing more, and ſhall purſue the ſame plan in humbly attempting to ſupport them.

"Firſt place," ſays Mr P. page 6. "there is no affirmative evidence that Moſes is the author of thoſe books," &c. Let us ſee. What do you mean by "affirmative evidence?" Is not the affirming, or aſſerting a thing to be the work of any perſon, affirmative evidence? It certainly is, But will you ſay that thoſe books are no where aſſerted or affirmed to be Moſes'? Look at the beginning of each book, and then ſay if you can, "there is no affirmative evidence?" you may as well ſay, there is no ſun in the firmament. Beſides, affirmative evidence is one of the moſt futile, and the leaſt to be depended upon in the world. How many affirmative falſehoods are there as to authors among us? How many affirmations have we in the *Age of Reaſon*, that the "bible is full of lies," &c. &c. The moſt valid and ſatisfactory evidences are contemporary, and ſucceeding perſons of credit, ſome of whom we have hinted at,

and ſhall take more notice of them by and by, teſtifying of Moſes and the books that go by his name

The next objection is "the ſtyle and manner," p. 6. To caſt ſome light upon this we ſhall conſider the *place* in which Moſes ſtood He was a public functionary, called by Jehovah and entruſted with his pleaſure and deſigns to a very high degree, and commiſſioned to make theſe known to the people. Conſider this man then in this ſituation, dealing forth laws and rules, the moſt obnoxious to the unbridled paſſions of a licentious multitude, with the ſevereſt penalties annexed: and at the ſame time the public executor of God's will in thoſe ſtatutes, living among the people, daily expoſed to their threats and murmurs, often inſulted with the approbrious term of tyrant, &c. This being the caſe, who can wonder at, or find fault with, Moſes for adopting the *third* perſon in ſtyle, and uſing every mean in his power to give the moſt ſolemn ſanction to the orders of God, and to his own appointment, in frequently ſaying, "*The Lord ſaid unto Moſes?*" &c. &c. I appeal to the world if the "ſtyle and manner" ſpeak not more, things being thus, for the books than any other could do. But in the next place I appeal to the bible. It would be almoſt endleſs to enumerate all the paſſages in the ſame ſtyle, from Iſaiah to Malachi both included. But I appeal to the books themſelves. Mr Paine ſays, page 6. "The whole of Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers, is in the third perſon, it is always *The Lord ſaid unto Moſes,*" &c What, the "*whole, always?*" Is not the third perſon *ſome* times uſed? Is it not *ſeveral* times uſed, and that too in *one* chapter, in a ſolemn manner both to God and the people, at a very particular time when the credit of Moſes both as a magiſtrate and prophet was at ſtake? Permit me, Sir, to recommend to your peruſal the 16th chapter of Numbers, and pardon me if I add, you muſt either deny the cleareſt truths, or your own aſſertions; you and your friends muſt either believe the bible, or plain, direct, barefaced falſehoods. To prove the books genuine, and the works of Moſes, I have further to add. 4. Moſes was the moſt qualified for that

work of any man then living. 5. The titles of the books ſpeak for him, and he is mentioned by name as a principle agent in the affairs they treat of, through Exodus and the three following books, in the firſt, ſecond, and third perſon, as circumſtances required, and is ſaid to have written certain parts at particular times, Exod. xxiv. 4. Deut. xxxi. 24, 24. Joſhua viii, 32. 6. He is quoted in the Old and New Teſtament as David and the other prophets are, Pſalms cv. and cvi. Mark xii. 19 John v. 46, &c. &c.

To clear Moſes from the charge of being a "coxcomb" from the ſolitary ſentence, Numb. xii. 3. *Now the man Moſes was very meek above all men*, &c. p. 6. 1. Moſes, by the command of God, choſe a ſucceſſor, Numb xxvii. 18. &c. *Joſhua in whom is the Spirit*, &c. Now as Joſhua had been long famous among the people, Moſes might have employed him as his amanuenſis, and he might, in defence of Moſes, by God's authority, to juſtify his inſulted ſervant at that remarkable time, for ſo it ſeems, verſe 1, &c. chap. xii. add, in a parentheſis, as is the caſe, even while Moſes was living, and no diſparagement to him ſuffering it to remain, *Now the man Moſes*, &c. Or, 2. He might have done it after Moſes' death, by way of reproof to the people, and as an eulogium on his predeceſſor.

Reſpecting the authenticity of the book of Deuteronomy, it is to be obſerved, 1. Moſes' name is at it the ſame as at the four preceding. Yet Mr P ſays, "It is an anonymous work." But he might as well have ſaid, *It is not in the bible.* 2. There is ſuch an affinity of ſtyle and matter between this book and the three preceding, that plainly diſcover it to be the work of Moſes as affirmed. 3. Moſes ſpeaks here much in the way Mr P. ſaid the others wanted to prove them to be his writing, in the firſt perſon. But Mr P. ſeems to admit it to be the work of "ſome Jewiſh prieſt who lived" about "350 years after Moſes." Mr P. might be led to think ſo, becauſe Moſes here confirms the order of prieſts. But does not Mr Paine by this admit of a ſyſtem of divinity among this people, and of "Jewiſh" divi-

nity too? Now as it is univerſally allowed by that nation and others, that the theology of Moſes only prevailed, Mr P. muſt either retract and admit of the received opinion of Moſes and his writings, or elſe prove to us whoſe religious tenets this people followed "350 years after the time of Moſes," which he pleaſes. Laſtly, for the honour of Deteronomy, our bleſſed Lord anſwered his and our grand adverſary in his attacks from this book. See Matt. chap. iv. 4. Deut. viii. 3. Matt. iv. 7. Deut. vi. 16. Matt. iv. 10. Deut. vi. 13. & x. 20. I do not wonder at Deiſts having ſuch a pique at this ſacred book, ſince it has been ſo ſucceſsfully uſed in ſilencing hell itſelf.

Page 10. Mr Paine takes notice of "hiſtorical and chronological errors," which I ſhall particularly notice when we come to the book of Ezra.

As to the book of *Geneſis* it is a record of things prior to Moſes, hence he appears there only as a reporter. With regard to the ſubject or things related, Mr Paine forgets himſelf when he calls them "abſurdities, or downright lies," and loſes ſight of the great deſign. 1. To inform men of the cauſe of the diſorder of their natures, and the diſorder in the world. 2. By the longevity of the antediluvians, propagation and protection of their ſpecies. 3. And ſuch to remain as living chronicles of things and changes both divine and human. Which inſtead of being "abſurdities," &c. are things worthy of a God.

"The bible," ſays Mr P. "is filled with murders," p. 11. And p. 15, 16, he ſays, "After this deteſtable order—in ſhort, the matters contained in this chapter, (Numb. xxxi.) as well as many other parts of the bible, are too horrid for humanity to read, or decency to hear—it is a book of lies, wickedneſs and blaſphemy." So, and all this liberty is taken under a pretence to clear God, and overturn the bible. Let us ſee, without taking notice at preſent of other parts of this pamphlet, of the ſame figures of blaſphemous invectives, abuſe and ſlander, and language too bad to be written but with a view to be overthrown, I beg leave to call Mr P.'s at-

tention. Sir, you muſt certainly have forgotten what you have read, for againſt theſe things are the cannons of its law expreſsly levelled, and upon the aggreſſors have its judgments been poured, as individuals, families, cities, nations—a world, can witneſs; in the execution of which, the hue and cry has been impiouſly raiſed againſt it, its author and thoſe employed. Was ever any thing more ſtrange? Its authenticity, its morality, its very juſtice, or rather God's has been impeached, who to keep his word in authority, has been obliged at times to exerciſe his juſtice in the puniſhment of offenders, and which acts of juſtice being recorded to deter others, you daringly call "horrid," "murders," &c. But further, to juſtify heaven's conduct, and wipe your indecent aſperſions off from God and the bible, I refer you to the propoſitions laid down, page 6. We then begin with the Canaanites. You muſt know, Sir, theſe were God's creatures, had offended; he had borne long with them, they ſtill ſtood out, ſtubborn and diſobedient; he would bear no longer. How ſhall he puniſh, and puniſh beſt? He ſoon determines, and let all admire, a threefold juſtice done. There is an injured and inſulted people, long the degraded vaſſals of an enemy to God and man. Theſe ſhall be delivered—'Tis done, they are brought forward, and their oppreſſors are buried in the ſea. Oppoſing nations ſhall feel the effects of God being with them; and in obedience to his will, they ſhall inflict vengeance on his rebels, and afterwards take poſſeſſion of the alienated eſtates. Who in all this ſhall ſay, *What doſt thou?* Yes, but "little children," &c. Your wrought-up feelings here, Sir, are futile, put on, put on to win on perſons unſuſpicious of your views, that with the greater grace you may vent your ſpleen upon the bible. But, 1. Has not God a right to do with his own as he pleaſes? 2. All muſt go to prevent contamination, and in this his goodneſs and wiſdom are conſpicuous, it being obvious to all, that youth ſooneſt contaminates youth. 3. Little children would be better done for.

But, Sir, in your impeachment of God's "moral juſtice," for ordering or ſuffering ſuch things, you have only done your work by halves; let me aſſiſt you. There are evils now exiſting between which and your lamented Canaan murders, there is as great a difference as between the twilight and the ſun at noon. Look at yonder cities in flames, where only *four* eſcape; need I name a Sodom? a Gomorrha? A little farther back, and you may ſee our race extirpated excepting *eight*. What havock there? Millions on millions, from blooming infancy to withered age, all ſwept at once away! O mournful ſtory! For this ſhall God eſcape your cenſure? But ſtop---Were it in our power to collect together from all the abodes of wretchedneſs earth's ſuffering mortals, and place them for a moment in your ſight and hearing, what would you ſay of "moral juſtice" then? What are your Canaan ſcenes to theſe, to theſe that *now* exiſt? Or could the curtains of the damned be drawn, I principally mean fallen angels, and you diſcover that group depict in woe, *Reſerved in chains of darkneſs*, &c.——But here, perhaps, your faith will faulter, if ſo I'll ſtop. But, Sir, upon a retroſpective view what think you now of God? Your ſyſtem leaves you in the dark: deiſm, like the heathen oracles of old, is here ſtruck dumb. Let me then aſſiſt you. And firſt, I recur to the ſupremacy of God, and this ſtate as diſordered. 2. I obſerve that all God's attacks upon his creatures have been *forced* upon him, as it were, in his own defence; this truth he proclaims in the ears of earth and heaven. Hear him then, Sir, and ſuffer him to ſpeak. *And God ſaw that the wickedneſs of man was great*, &c. &c. Geneſis chap. vi. 5, 6, 7, Gen. xix. 13, &c. Deut. xviii. 9.---12. His injured honour, and deeply violated laws demanded vengeance, which, after repeated warnings, he was pleaſed to take by flood, by fire, and ſword, With regard to the preſent calamities on earth know, Sir, that 1. We are a race of rebels, in grand attack againſt heaven itſelf: *They are all gone aſide, there is none that doeth good, no not one*, in compariſon. Pſal. xiv. 3. 2. Thoſe ſuf-

ferers amongſt us, are, as it were, ſtate priſoners taken with weapons in their hands, or are the deſcendants of attainted criminals. 3. Many of theſe, when matters are cleared up, will ceaſe to ſuffer. Theſe are what we learn from ſcripture, and from facts which are daily paſſing before us, from whence alſo we learn ſubmiſſion and gather comfort, reſigning ourſelves to God, from which, you, cruelly unkind, would draw our affections, and againſt whom you would ſet our hearts! Heavens forgive you, and ſet you right!

With regard to theſe I hinted at, *Reſerved in chains*, &c. their ſuffering is the effect of their temerity. May we fear, leſt we alſo for ours be made ſharers in their puniſhment!

Things being thus, I truſt it appears evident to all that Mr Paine has miſtaken the character of God, and the nature of his word, which has led him ſo unbecomingly and irreverently to treat them as he has done; and his inattention to the piety, faithfulneſs and ſtation of Moſes, has induced him unmercifully to affix to his character that of "moſt horrid," p. 14; and unfeelingly ranking him, p. 15, "among the moſt deteſtable of villains."

I now paſs on to p. 18, where Mr P. ſays, "I proceed to the book of Joſhua, and to ſhew that Joſhua is not the author, that it is anonymous. The evidence I ſhall produce is contained in the book itſelf; I will not go out of the bible for proof againſt the bible." This Mr P. has often promiſed, and which I have attended, and ſhall tenaciouſly adhere, to in ſupporting that book. Mr P.'s objections are, 1. It "is written in the third perſon, "*His*,' Joſhua's, "*fame was noiſed throughout all the country*." P. 18. And, 2. That there are things referred to that could only belong to the times after Joſhua's death. 1. Here Mr P. a in the caſe of the preceeding books, ſets off with a ſtory, when he ſays, "It is anonymous," for on the very face of it ſtands, both in the Hebrew and Engliſh, *The Book of Joſhua*. 2. That he was a writer, the book declares, chap. xxiv. 26. 3. The *third* perſon as I have proved, is proper-

eſt, and the prophetic ſtyle. 4. The *firſt* perſon is often uſed, and that too on the moſt ſolemn occaſions, chap. xviii. 2, and part of the xxivth chapter. What a barefaced way is this of forging ſtories, and ſupporting error!

With regard to what is ſaid of things after his death, we ſhall clear up with every thing of the kind in other books, by and by. As to Mr P.'s invectives and flouriſhes, p. 18. &c. amount to this, That he often forgets himſelf the great Agent, cauſe and time; and alſo that the language was adopted to the received philoſophy of the age.

The book of *Judges* we allow to be as Mr P. ſays, p. 21. "anonymous." And what then? Does that imply it had no author? Or that truth wants the name of a man to make it valid and give it ſanction? And what has Mr P. got by it? Nothing, but that for once he has ſpoken the truth. But what are the friends to revelation advantaged by it? Much, for, 1. It goes to ſupport Joſhua and the books of Moſes. 2. It aſſerts the great wickedneſs of the Canaanites whom God deſtroyed. 3. It proves that the judgments which came upon the Iſraelites afterwards were owing to their diſobedience to God's revealed will.

As to the book of *Ruth*, p. 22. Mr P. is full of his low wit and ſcurrility, which we leave him to enjoy, and that as he attempts not to diſprove it, I ſhall only juſt obſerve, he ſees not the deſign. It is to harmonize the ways of God, and unite circumſtances, all tending to elucidate the ſacred ſtory, bringing the lineage of the Redeemer thro' the family of Boaz and Ruth, to ſhew his connection with both Jew and Gentile.

"I come now," ſays Mr P. page 23. "to the two books of Samuel," which he adds are "anonymous, and without authority." In anſwer, 1. The books have his name in front. 2. He was a writer, 1 Sam. x. 5. 3. The firſt book is written in the firſt and third perſon. But after all, whether he wrote ſome or none of the firſt book, it cannot invalidate the hiſtory as the book ſtand. But, ſays Mr P. "The ſecond book of Samuel begins

with an account of things that did not happen till four years after Samuel was dead," p. 25. Anſwer. 1. It is allowed that Samuel could not write the latter part of the firſt, nor any part of the ſecond of thoſe books. Yes, but the ſecond has his name; I grant it; ſo has that of Ruth her name, but ſhe was never conſidered as the writer. But obſerve, 2. The ſecond book goes on with the thread of the ſtory begun in the firſt, in which Samuel had acted ſo diſtinguiſhed a part. 3. The ſecond has, with the firſt book, the addenda of *Book of Kings*. But, Sir, you took no notice of this; no, as you are no friend to the name, you alſo knew it would not ſuit your purpoſe. But thus are you again detected, and inſtead of being as you ſay "anonymous," both books ſtand fair on the records of time, with a double title.

With regard to the two books of Kings and the two books of Chronicles, you confeſs, p. 26. that "It is impoſſible for us to know, what degree of credit to give to the matters related therein," &c. Implying, eſpecially from your mode of reaſoning, that ſome degree of credit is due; being myſelf ſatisfied, and letting others think for themſelves, I ſhall give you time to conſider who perhaps may again be what you once were, a lover of the bible. However, we have cauſe to be thankful for the many ſacred injunctions, inſtructions and encouragements we find there, bearing analogy with and confirming the other ſacred books already conſidered. Although thoſe books treat much of war and bad men, it muſt be allowed there is much there to be learned of God's government over both kings and ſtates. We have likewiſe to adore the great Supreme, that where our ſalvation is moſt concerned, things are the moſt clear and plain.

Page 33. Mr P. begins with *Ezra*, and acknowledges the book to have been "written immediately after the Babyloniſh captivity," adding "Ezra, one of the perſons who returned, it is probable, wrote the account of that affair," page 35. This is enough. Here we have no trouble to prove the *writer*, *time*, &c. In like manner Mr P. bears his teſtimony to the reality of *Ne-*

hemiah, ſame page, but adds, " There is juſt as much of the word of God in thoſe books, as there is in any of the hiſtories of France or England." I obſerve, 1. There is much to be learned of the government and goodneſs of God in the hiſtories of both nations, by a pious contemplative mind, though but ſeldom noticed by the writers. 2. In theſe books you may learn much of God. 1. How he afflicted a people he loved for their ſins. 2. How he fulfilled his ſervants predictions, and delivered this people again from their diſtreſs and enemies.

But Mr P. complains of contradiction or error in Ezra's enrolment of the families which returned, p. 36. " The writer begins his enrolment in the following manner: chap. ii. ver. 3. " The children of Paroth, two thouſand one hundred ſeventy and two," &c. making " a total at the 64th verſe." of *Forty and two thouſand three hundred and threeſcore.*" " But," adds Mr P. " whoever will take the trouble of caſting up the ſeveral particulars," ſubjoined, " will find that the total is but 29,818, ſo that the error is 12,542." and exclaims, " what certainty then can there be in the bible for any thing?"

We muſt look into the bible itſelf. At the 59th verſe, ſame chapter, we are told, *And theſe were they which went up from Tal-melah, Tel-harſa, Cherub, Addan, and Immer; but they could not ſhew their father's houſe, and their ſeed, whether they were of Iſrael.* And at the 61ſt and 62d verſes, it is further ſaid, *And of the children of the prieſts: the children of Habaiah, the children of Koz, the children of Barzillai,—theſe ſought their regiſter among thoſe that were reckoned by genealogy, but they were not found.* So it ſeems that thoſe only who were pure Iſraelites were regiſtered. It is ſaid, ver. 64, *The whole congregation together was* 42,360. Now allowing the above ſeven families, verſes 59 and 61, to have had upon an average about 2000 each, and this is not at all improbable, ſeeing *the children of Paroſh* amounted to 2172, and Mr Paine himſelf ſeems to have ſeen nothing unaccountable in this ſtatement, there

will be about 14,000, nearly 1500 more than this gentleman wants to make Ezra's number compleat, and his account true. In all controverſies, it is a received axiom, that, to do juſtice and ſhew candour, we are not to raiſe difficulties where a thing appears at firſt ſight dubious; but if there remains a probable way of ſolving it, it will reflect honour on the antagoniſt to find it out, and combat that. But if he paſſes it by, endeavours to keep it out of ſight, or ſeeks to cover it, ſhould it be brought to light, and into the ſervice and ſupport of the ſubject conteſted, how deficient of candour, fair reaſoning, and even juſtice itſelf, muſt ſuch an opponent appear? How fruitleſs, empty and vain muſt all his arguments be raiſed from ſuch premiſes?——How applicable this is to Mr P. on the preſent occaſion, I leave for the judicious to determine. But to return.

So far it appears *Ezra* ſpoke the truth, and deſerves our credit. But next comes

Nehemiah, who Mr P. ſays, p. 36, "in like manner, gives a liſt of the returned families, and of the number of each family." However this gentleman gives us here a proof that he himſelf is not infallible. He obſerves that Nehemiah reckons, chap. vii. ver. 8, "The children of Paroſh, two thouſand three hundred and ſeventy two." (ſecond edition) Now my bible tells me, at the ſame place, "The children of Paroſh, two thouſand *one* hundred ſeventy and two." I will not retort upon him here, only obſerve, that men fond of finding out faults in others, ſhould be very careful to avoid them themſelves; for they look far worſe in ſuch than in any body elſe. But to clear up theſe difficulties, 1. Nehemiah ſeems to have numbered the people after they had been at Jeruſalem ſome time, Nehem. chap. vii. 5. 2. The regiſter he mentions might be an improved copy, for it is certain that many regulations in families took place after Ezra wrote the firſt account, which ſeems to have been done in Babylon on the people's ſetting out; for it appears Ezra did not go up with them, but ſome of the princes. Ezra ii. 1, 2. He followed ſome time after, Ezra vii. 6.

3. The deficiency in Nehemiah's number may be

made up in the ſame way, alluded to in Ezra, ſeeing there are the ſame reaſons, Neh. chap. vii. ver. 61, 63, 64. 4. Both accounts may be true; the one when the people ſet off from Babylon, and the other, after they had been a while at Jeruſalem, and things had been regulated by thoſe two active men.

Now, though Mr Paine ſays, p. 37, "Theſe writers may do well enough for bible-makers, but not for any thing where truth and exactneſs are neceſſary," I am happy to find, that, after all, theſe "bible-makers," muſt ſtand fair in their reputation, with every candid, impartial inſpector of the bible. I hope it will not be deemed impertinent, as this gentleman is ſo fond of exulting over theſe, and other ancient worthies, if I obſerve here, that he really ſeems to be either a bad man, having a deſign upon the public, or a thoughtleſs man unworthy of confidence, or credit, unleſs men will believe againſt conviction, and inſult all their ſenſes; for he appears no better than the men, at the worſt, he endeavours to traduce. Take then which you pleaſe; only conſider, ye votaries of his, in your ſerious, reflective moments, thoſe moments in which you appear moſt like men accountable to God, you fall into the ſtrain of Moſes —David, and thoſe men this gentlemen derides. But if you will not, and all perſuaſion fails, and plaineſt facts, in oppoſition to the moſt forced and ſtrained abſurdities, have no weight with you, death will ſurely bring you into the views of the bible, and bible-makers. If this then be the caſe, and you have no certainty to the contrary; and no ſecurity, I ſay you have *no ſecurity*, where, when, nor how that leveller may come. Take then the bible with you, it cannot hurt you now, but it may help you; it may not help you then, but it may harm you. But further. However theſe men may appear in making, this gentleman ſeems but a lame hand in marring the bible; and pardon me if I add, he may do tolerably to amuſe the ignorant, and uninformed; decoy the unwary, flouriſh with his pen, and make a little ſport; but if he did not ſhew more adroitneſs in his office of Secretary to America, than he has in detecting the errors of

the bible, ſo far, I apprehend he muſt have cut but a poor figure in the eſtimation of the beſt informed.

But to return. Mr Paine ſeems aware of the dilemma, and the advantage that theſe books, Ezra, and Nehemiah, being true, muſt prove to the bible, he exclaims, p. 35. " But thoſe accounts are nothing to us, nor to any other perſons," &c. Yes, but they are, as I truſt we ſhall prove.

1. Let it be remembered, that the ſtate of things in a civil, but above all in a religions ſenſe, became worſe and worſe among the Jews, from about the middle of Solomon's reign, as may be ſeen in the books of Kings, Chronicles, and the Prophets, eſpecially Iſaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, till the puniſhment threatened overtook them by the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, Jeremiah 39th chapter.

2. Pious men among whom was Ezra, Nehemiah, and Daniel, attentive to the word of God, though in an enemy's country, and in a ſtate of captivity, diſcovering the painful period of deſtined puniſhment nearly at an end, feeling for the indignities offered their religion, and countrymen, faſted and prayed, eſpecially *Nehemiah* and *Daniel*, Neh. chap. i. 4, &c. Dan. ix. 2, &c. The Lord anſwered and inclined the heart of the then reigning prince, *Cyrus*, to accompliſh his ſervants wiſhes, and his own intentions, Ezra i. 1, &c.

3. Ezra and Nehemiah were appointed to take the charge, &c. The firſt thing they ſet about was a reformation and regulation in the ſtate, both of a civil and religious nature.

Now it is ſuppoſed, that till this time the various ſcriptures were like a choice collection of materials, tolerably fitted up and ready for putting together to form a building of the celeſtial order, of the moſt exquiſite beauty, ſtrength, and ſymmetry, which being then done, has ſo far ſtood for ages, to the honour of God, and to the comfort of good men—but to the grief of evil ſpirits, and to the envy of Atheiſts, Deiſts, and Infidels. And though theſe books had paſſed through many hands, ſuch as Moſes, Joſhua, Samuel, David, &c. and each

adding as God directed, yet had they never been in the order or perfection, Ezra left them. He ſeems to have been a man equally qualified for this taſk, both of explaining the old, and giving ſomething new, according to the ſtate of things and times, with any that went before him. Witneſs,

1. His being ſo much approved of by heaven, Ezra chap. viii. 23. and x. 1, 2.

2. He is ſaid to be a *ſcribe* well acquainted with the law, &c. chap. vii. 6.

3. He is called a *prieſt*, Neh. viii. 2.

4. The people approved of him and his labours, Neh. viii. 1, 6.

To ſolve all difficulties it is moſt rational to have recourſe to the moſt probable means. The moſt probable and rational way of ſolving all the apparent difficulties in the bible, is to conſider the main of the work as belonging to the man whoſe name it bears; or to have recourſe to what is written, and ſo far give it our belief as it correſponds with what we are more certain to be the word of God, by men approved of heaven, and as it tends to inform our judgments, mend our lives, and change our natures. Additions certainly have been made to various parts of the bible, eſpecially to the moſt ancient parts, and inſtead of denying we glory in it. Inſtead of giving all up for thoſe, we love them and the whole the better; becauſe we the more diſcover the goodneſs and care of the Author of the whole, to ſucceeding generations, and by thoſe are enabled to underſtand the whole the better.

Now thoſe addenda in the bible which Mr P. falls ſo much out with, and can ſee no way how they could be there and ſtrictly true, as if God and man ceaſed from their wonted gifts, grace and talents on the death of Moſes, or Joſhua, &c. and on account of which, he inſults the Almighty, and throws the whole in his face; I ſay they are either,

1. *Immediately* following, as in *Deuteronomy*, laſt chapter, and the laſt of *Joſhua*, &c. And how futile is this as a fault! Common ſenſe muſt ſee theſe were

never to be received as the words of Moſes, &c. any more than the witneſſes names to a will can be called the man's will; and yet they are parts, and uſeful parts too; that inſtead of proving the thing "ſpurious," tend to confirm it as genuine and true.

2. Or, more *remote*, as is the caſe with many parts of the books inveſtigated. Much of the goodneſs of God is ſeen in raiſing up men in ſucceſſion of the ſame ſpirit, as he ſaid of Joſhua, Samuel, David, Ezra, &c. &c. to connect things ſoon after, as in the caſe of Joſhua, &c. and more diſtant as Ezra, &c.

Now by this care of God, and attention of men, we have had the ſcriptures preſerved, and modelled to our own time and capacities.

Ezra lived about 450 years before our Saviour, and about 1000 years after Moſes. Great muſt have been the alteration in this revolutionary world, where men, places, and things are ever changing, in that ſpace of 1000 years. To elucidate obſolete names, &c. and to connect diſtant with near, antique with modern, theſe men laboured, particularly Ezra, in all the conteſted parts, from Geneſis to Ezra, none of which come lower, nor ſo low, for nearly two centuries, as his own time, and how much he was taken up with theſe things, we are expreſsly informed, as much ſo as can be expected from the conciſe manner of ſcripture on things of this nature, Ezra chap. vii. 10. *For Ezra had prepared his heart to ſeek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Iſrael ſtatutes and judgments.*

Now, Sir, I hope you will no more ſay "thoſe accounts are nothing to us," &c. We have been ſhewing, and beg leave to ſhew a little more to you, how much they concern both you and us.

1. In your animadverſions on Ezra, p. 35. you talk of "compilers" of the bible, who ſo fit as Ezra in his day? And why might not inſpired men have added, nay, why ought they not to have added, what was neceſſary through length of time and other local circumſtances, a word, a ſentence, &c. to make the ſubject plain, without incurring ſo much cenſure from you?

Nay, had they not, the bible by this time might have been a collection of unintelligible jargon, and the pious would have had to lament such inattention.

2. You admit that Ezra and Nehemiah were "returned persons," p. 35. from the captivity to Jerusalem, &c. Do you not then by this, allow of the antecedent state, laws, and government of this people? How will you get off it?

3. By your admitting of these two men, Ezra and Nehemiah writing the books that bear their names, p. 35. Do you not allow all they have written, the apparent contradiction in their accounts of the returned persons excepted? which I trust by this time from what has been said on that head, has in good part vanished. Now, Sir,

1. Ezra is said in those books to be a *ready scribe*, &c. Ezra vii. 6.

2. He is said to be a *priest*, Neh. viii. 2. and tho' this class of men is not much admired by you, yet it proves there was a system of theology among this people.

3. That system is called in those books alternately the *law of Moses*, the *Law of Jehovah*, *Law of the God of heaven*, *Statutes of Israel*, &c.

4. These Ezra sought out and collected, he did not make new laws, but gathered the old, harmonized, and brought them forth pure and intelligible, with God's assistance and approbation, Ezra vii. 6. 10.

5. Ezra and Nehemiah acted, consistantly themselves with the law of Moses; they fasted, they prayed, and confessed their sins, and in those solemn acts of devotion again and again, quote Moses' writings, Ezra ix. 4, 5, &c. &c. Neh. i. 4, 5, 7, 8, &c. Neh. ix. 14.

6. After the law was collected and put in order, they read, expounded, published and enforced it, with the hearty concurrence and belief of the people, Ezra x. 4. Neh. viii. 1. to the 8th verse included.

To these laws, &c. the people solemnly bound themselves to adhere, Ezra x. whole chapter, Neh. viii. 9. to the end; and the 9th chap. ver. 1, 2, 3.

Now, Sir, what ſay you to theſe things; what think you of the reality of Moſes and the authenticity of the books that bear his name? Do you ſtill believe that all is fiction, cheat, deception? What, all this a non-entity! No Moſes? No law? Ezra might as a prieſt, Nehemiah might as a magiſtrate, go great lengths to awe the people; but can it be ſuppoſed they would go ſo far without a foundation, and a tried one too? yet even ſuppoſing this, if ſuch a thing be ſuppoſable, would the people, ſo many thouſand in number, allow it?—— What? *diſgrace* themſelves by confeſſions, and load, loath, execrate and torment themſelves with, and on account of their own and the ſins of ages paſt! and after all, tamely *bind* themſelves to obſerve and keep all thoſe rugged and forbidding ſtatutes! What Pope was ever witneſs to ſuch implicit faith? Or what deſpot ever ſaw a people ſo willing to be ſlaves?

What monſtrous abſurdities muſt be here admitted, if no where elſe, to deny the bible! What ſwallows muſt they have, to let down ſuch raw materials as you offer to their faith, in contradiſtinction to common ſenſe, matters of fact, and the univerſal conſent of a whole nation, whoſe honour, eaſe, profit, yea, every thing, civil and ſacred, concurred to induce them, if not true, to deny and withſtand.

Now, Sir, we are come to this iſſue at length. You muſt deny what you have admitted, p. 35, prove Ezra and Nehemiah non-entities, or cheats; thoſe people infatuated, believing a lie, publiſhing their own ſhame, for ſhame's ſake, and in love with thraldrom, without advantage; or elſe you muſt retract all you have ſaid to overturn the bible; which you think proper. Here I fix my foot, take which ſide you pleaſe; chooſe, chooſe, Sir, the latter, and be humbled—Ceaſe from contending with God, he will prove too many for you. Give over loading his ſervants with reproach, *their Redeemer is mighty, he ſhall plead their cauſe.* Revile the bible no more, Truth is ſtrong and will prevail. But if you will not be admoniſhed, forget not that your own weapons are againſt you; and if you will proceed, do ſo—

boaſt of your own ſagacity, bully the Deity and his ſervants, ridicule the bible, as you cannot overturn it, at leaſt you have not yet, and let your admirers join with you in trumpetting your praiſe, or---ſhame. But proceed we now to hear againſt, and juſtify the cauſe of God and truth in others.

"The next book in courſe," ſays Mr P. p. 37, "is the book of Eſther," &c. Here is another of our mothers in Iſrael alſo rather ungenteelly treated by this gentleman. Fearful, perhaps, of the faſcinating power of female charms, if not her morals, knowing they have brought to bend before them the mightieſt of men, leſt caught in the ſnare he ſhould be brought to worſhip at her altar, and adore her God; offering violence to the pureſt virtue, he condemns and cenſures, whom he cannot pervert. Next comes,

"The book of Job," of whom you ſay "more diſpoſed to be reſigned than he is capable." page 37. This is bad philoſophy and worſe divinity. Curious indeed to ſee the ſtream riſe higher than the fountain. But ſoon you ſay "Patience has but a ſmall ſhare in the character of the perſon of whom the book treats." "Bible-makers," &c. p. 39. are not more at a loſs in what part of the bible to fix the book, than you ſeem at with yourſelf where to place the man, above the ſun, or below the ſtars; with the ſheep, or among the goats.

You had once an high opinion, you tell us, of the book of Job, p. 37, but you have learned ſince that it "does not belong to the bible." What may we underſtand from what you here ſpeak? Is not this a very high compliment, Sir, you pay the bible? But we will take no advantage of you; truth needs neither declamation nor defamation to ſupport it; we leave thoſe to its enemies. But why not belong to the bible? It cannot be for the immorality of the perſon treated of, according to your account, nor for what the book contains, if you are to be credited, p. 37. only ſome certain phraſes, page 38, which going to the utmoſt, you in the ſame page apparently admit the propriety of. But there are two men you have found out, who help you in this matter.

But I have to obſerve, theſe are brothers of the ſcornful tribe, one of them eſpecially, who in his day, had as little regard for the bible as Mr P. and both of them are very erroneous: Beſides, I thought you promiſed to keep to the bible, p. 6. 10. 18. You are hard puſhed, and find bible-evidence comes in but ſlowly to your help, and are, 'tis likely, glad of any aſſiſtance. Well, you will now permit me to bring my evidence next, in favour of this book. See then Ezek. chap. xiv. 14. James v. 11. Conſidering where theſe men ſtand, and what you have allowed reſpecting the bible, you cannot but admit of their teſtimony, as, at leaſt, equally valid with *Abenezra*, the Spaniſh, Jewiſh doctor, as I ſuppoſe you mean, and *Spinoza*, the wonderful Spinoza, "whoſe name is d——d to everlaſting fame." If you would allow me, I would bring a *third*, I mean the Deity. Hear him ſpeak, Job i. 8. Would he ſay ſo much of a man, an account of whom he would deem unworthy of a place among his ſervants?

Your objections to it from its being "the production of a mind cultivated in ſcience," &c. p. 38. are all convincing proofs to me that it was written by Moſes, *who was learned in all the wiſdom of the Egyptians*, men famous for natural philoſophy and aſtronomy.

As to your objections of greciſms, you muſt know they are only in the tranſlation, not in the Hebrew. The tranſlators adopted themſelves to improved ſociety, and following the Greek tranſlators, they uſed Pleiades, inſtead of *Kimah*, and Orion, in the place of *Keſil*, &c. the two original words, which may be ſeen in the margin of ſome bibles.

You might as well deny Engliſhmen the honour of being acquainted with ſome uſeful ſciences among us, ſeeing many of their technical names are purely Greek. And as juſtly might an enemy to revelation, on taking up an Engliſh bible, and on reading, *Moſes ſaid unto the people, if ye will hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord*, &c. exclaim, Moſes never ſaid this, he never ſaid ſo in his life. This is Engliſh, and Moſes knew nothing of Engliſh. Beſides, this is printed, and

I'll prove printing was not found out for ages after Moſes. Here are truths that cannot be controverted, but do they overturn the bible? No; no more than Mr Paine's objections.

After giving the Jews, thoſe living oracles for God and Moſes, a wipe, you haſten forward to tell us, that men formerly made "ſtatues and images," p. 40. 'Tis true, they did; but amidſt the multitude made and *worſhipped* by the ancients, I do not at preſent remember any made to your delivering divinity, *Impoſſibility*, vide preface, p. 10, bottom. You then add, "I paſs on to the book of *Pſalms*, of which it is not neceſſary to make much obſervation." Some of them, it appears, you are pleaſed with; others, you ſay, "are very revengeful." How eaſy is it, Sir, to ſee the mote in our brother's eye, without diſcovering the beam in our own? You further add, "It is however an error, or impoſition, to call them the Pſalms of David," &c. p. 40.

Who, in defending the authenticity of the Pſalms, ever gave the honour of them all to David? whatever ſome may have ſaid inadvertently in this way, you can only ſpeak ſo knowingly againſt them; making the innocent inattention of ſome, the bad argument of your own purpoſe and deſign.

You ſeem, Sir, all along perfectly at variance with God and man, and at laſt, apparently fall out with yourſelf. Your very ſenſes you ſeem an enemy to, or you would not deny your eyes their proper functions. If you did not, would they not inform you of what is to be ſeen and read both in the Hebrew and Engliſh, that ſome of them are the production of other holy men? But thus you take advantage of God's ſervants, in the revenge you ought to take upon yourſelf.

The plain obvious title, in the original as well as Engliſh, is *The Book of Pſalms*, and whoſe, you are told from the original as you go along, or nothing is ſaid.

It is very probable the 137th Pſalm might have been written by Ezra, on the return of the Jews from their captivity. Its author is not mentioned.

Thus, ſacred book! have we another evidence of thy

fair excellencies, and thine enemy's deſigns. Thou, too open with a view to cheat, and he too much blinded to diſcover thy matchleſs beauties, or his own miſtakes—his own ſhame!

"*The book of Proverbs*," Mr P. will have to be "a collection," p. 40. "from authors belonging to other nations." It may or it may not; the book no where ſays all there are *only* Solomon's; and as we have ſeen hitherto, how careful we ought to be of taking any thing on Mr P.'s bare authority, ſo ought we to be aware here alſo. But he ſays "ſome of the proverbs did not appear till two hundred and fifty years after the death of Solomon." Quoting as proof, "*Theſe are alſo proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah king of Judah copied out.*" Marvellous ſagacity! wonderful diſcovery! But ſeriouſly, might not theſe have been long in uſe among the pious before that time? Indeed it appears plainly they were, and that this godly prince, employed thoſe men to write copies off to be ſent abroad, that they might be more generally known.

"The book of *Eccleſiaſtes*," you ſeem pretty well to admit of; but with other faults, the author "at laſt," you ſay, page 41, became "melancholy." That is, he became a *penitent* as he ought, and as ſome others juſtly ſhould. *Melancholy*, uneaſy, that he had ſpent ſo much precious time—ſuch uncommon talents, to ſo little good purpoſe. Forſaking the bible-way, as many have done, ſome of whom as yet *glory in their ſhame*, he forgat God, his duty, and his ſoul; at the recollection of which, he found nothing could give him eaſe but his return to God; and that others might learn wiſdom at his expence, he wrote that excellent book the *Eccleſiaſtes*, or *Preacher*. It was kind, it was juſt; it was what he owed both God and man: And there he ſtands a diſtinguiſhed, diſappointed votary of the world; as a beacon to warn others from ſplitting on that rock; and as a monument of heaven's forbearance and pity, encouraging the guilty to return, and that none ſuch need deſpair of mercy.

With regard " to the men called prophets," you tell us, page 43, you leave their character " to another part of the work." But here you inform us of *Iſaiah*, that the book aſcribed to him is " one of the moſt wild and diſorderly compoſitions ever put together," &c. " and that a ſchool-boy would ſcarcely have been excuſable for writing ſuch ſtuff." Let me obſerve, It is not the elegance, but the doctrines of the bible we defend; and yet even on this head, we are ready to meet every bible-hater in the world, particularly reſpecting the prophet you ſo much degrade. To be ſhort, if I miſtake not, what language has to win upon the mind to gain conſent, we find in him.

As to Iſaiah's prophecies, how they were *all* accompliſhed I leave for the bible, that book *you* agreed to decide every thing by, to determine; the principal and moſt intereſting of which to us, we ſhall have to take notice of in the goſpels.

As to your forced meanings and comments, with your falſehoods, impertinent and impious ribaldry, and ridicule, I leave for yourſelf to enjoy; and your friends to be delighted with; we ſhall have to meet you on this ſubject, where you again repeat your blaſphemies, in another place.

" Jeremiah. This prophet, as he is called, lived in the time that Nebuchadnezzar beſieged Jeruſalem," &c. p. 47. Here is a confirmation from an enemy, that ſuch a man exiſted, and exiſted at the time the bible ſpeaks of. So then, for once Mr Paine and this book agree; it is not then quite full of " lies," nor is it altogether " ſpurious." Has, Sir, the late dreadful ſtretch of thought to falſify the greateſt truths in the bible, and the horrid perverſion of your inventive faculties to ſubſtitute indecent language and invectives, in the room of the pureſt ſentiments, and the moſt intereſting ſubjects to mankind, alarmed your conſcience? Shall I congratulate you as a man ſelf-awakened in the awful moment of his manſion tottering, with juſt time to eſcape ere it buries him in its ruins? Nay, alas! you ſoon fall back into your old principles again, that was but a ſhort-lived lu-

cid interval; you juſt on the back of it add, " Every thing relating to Jeremiah ſhews him to have been man of an equivocal character," p. 47. and this you endeavour to prove by his metaphor of the potter, chap. 18th. Really, Sir, I know not how you figure as a legiſlator, but your dexterity as a divine, is, in my judgment, far below mediocrity. In your comment upon the 7th, 8th, 9th, and 10th verſes of that chapter, page 48, you diſcover not only that you underſtand [redacted] the bible, but that you are ignorant of the different parts of ſpeech. Thoſe are the *conditions* expreſſed, not the *predictions* of God's threatened vengeance, which to eſcape, all-gracious as HE is, dealing with men as free agents, the guilty have only to comply, &c. Than which, inſtead of " ſtupidity," nothing diſcovers more the beauty, harmony, and excellency of any code of laws, eſpecially " the bible."

The book is objected to further from " The hiſtorical parts," of it being written " in the moſt confuſed condition," page 48. In anſwer to this charge, and to thoſe of a ſimilar nature in other parts of the bible, I would juſt obſerve, the buſineſs of prophets, was not to write the hiſtory of the times; they were to ſpeak and write as God commanded, and circumſtances called, not to gratify the curioſity of vain minds; for thoſe who will not give them credit for things as they now ſtand, would not believe them had they been more minute in their details.

The next charge conſiſts " of duplicity and falſe prediction," p. 52. where you " mention two inſtances." And as to your concluſion it is as ſevere, as your miſtake is notorious. " This man of God, as he is called, could tell a lie," &c. Where have you proof it was one? I want that —— But you tell us " for certainly he did not go to Zedekiah to make," &c. ibid. No, he did not go on purpoſe; but are you ſure he did not " make his ſupplication" to him at that time? We will look at the bible ourſelves. You ſet off at the 17th verſe of the 38th chapter, but I wiſh to draw your attention to the beginning of the interview at the 14th verſe, where

it appears the king ſent for the prophet. Do you, Sir, know the nature of a "ſupplication"? Tell me then is there any thing of it in the 15th verſe? Do you underſtand in what manner an anſwer to a ſupplication ſhould be worded? Pray inform me, if there is not ſomething of it at the 16th verſe? O, Sir, what are you not ready to ſay to diſparage the bible? "Duplicity" argues deceit, and what deceit does there appears in this man of God? Inſtead of that, what faithfulneſs and courage does he diſcover even to the king himſelf, ver. 18? Had he been in the Convention, he could ſcarcely have ſaid more *of*, than he then ſaid *to*, the king.

Next the "falſe prediction;" let us ſee how Mr P. will come off here. You refer us, Sir, to the 34th chapter of Jeremiah, ver. 2—6. "Thus ſaith," &c. p. 53. then in the ſame page you deny all, and in your uſual poſitive way add, "what then can we ſay of theſe prophets, but that they are impoſtors and liars?" Hard words, and unkind treatment. However, there is one thing gives us comfort, and them honour, you cannot *prove* them to be ſuch; no, nor can you prove that *one* thing failed of being exactly fulfilled as the prophet ſpake. That the Babylonians took the city and burned it; took Zedekiah and carried him to Nebuchadnezzar and that he ſaw him; that he was carried to Babylon and put in priſon, we have only to look at the 39th chapter, and the 10th and 11th verſes of the 52d. At the ſame time, while theſe things were told him as inevitable, if he did not go forth to the princes the king of Babylon had ſent againſt Jeruſalem, chap. xxxviii. 17, 18, &c. God commanded the prophet to aſſure him, after all, that he *ſhould not die by the ſword*, that is, according to the ſacred ſtyle, a violent death, which as a priſoner he might naturally be led to fear, chapter xxxiv. 4, &c. Now I confeſs, from the ſilence of ſcripture, we are at a loſs fully to prove the accompliſhment of the promiſe here made to this prince; but ſhall we give up the bible on that account, on account of a thing ſo inſignificant in itſelf, eſpecially as it tells us no where to the contrary? Our opponents think us

fools in believing the bible, with evidence for it every way, clear as the ſun; and to give it up for this, they might juſtly think us more than mad. Remember, Sir, in the above conceſſion, we give you all you have a right to, and would have done the ſame before, but happily for us, and unfortunately for you, we have met with no ſuch opportunity all the way we have hitherto come. So much for the honour of the book you hate, and we love; you depreciate, and we defend.

Now, Sir, though we cannot fully prove, we will offer a few conjectures reſpecting the fulfilment of the above promiſe to Zedekiah, and we call upon you to overturn them, or prove to the contrary.

1. God had often promiſed he ſhould not die by the ſword of his enemies.

2. That he might die in peace though a priſoner, was not impoſſible; nay, how many princes in priſons have lived and died in greater peace, than thoſe ruling at large?

3. Was it, is it an uncommon thing to honour a dead enemy? A dead king could do no injury, and therefore out of reſpect to royalty, the king of Babylon might order, or at leaſt ſuffer, the Jews there to do all the rites of honourable burial to their deceaſed ſovereign.

4. What language could be more proper on the affecting occaſion, reſpecting fallen majeſty, than that which God ſaid ſhould be uſed as part of the funeral oration? *And will lament thee, ſaying, Ah, Lord!*

You exultingly exclaim, page 53, as if you had as certainly gotten the bible and all its writers in chains, as Nebuchadnezzar had the unfortunate king of Judah, "Thus much for another of the lying prophets, and the book that bears his name." Suffer me, Sir, to join the chorus, and with greater truth, and greater credit, prove the reverſe if you can, add our part, *Thus much for another* FAITHFUL *Prophet, and the* ſacred *book that bears his name.*

At the 54th page you expreſs yourſelf thus, "The remainder of the books aſcribed to the men called prophets, I ſhall not trouble myſelf much about, but take

them collectively into the obſervations I ſhall offer on the character of the men called prophets." In your remarks here, and which you carry on for two or three pages, we give you credit, and believe you right in ſome things, and in others we conſider you very wrong. We admit of your being right in,

1. Your allowing and confirming the certainty of there being in the times you allude to, ſuch men as prophets.

2. That thoſe men foretold things to come.

3. We believe you right in the affinity you make between that of a prophet and a poet, and think with you, that there is not a word in the Hebrew bible ſignifying a prophet, that does not mean a poet; for as they received the divine *afflatus*, and were honoured with the manifeſtation of the greateſt and moſt important truths, ſo their ideas were raiſed, like thoſe of poets on the nobleſt ſubjects, to take in the grandeſt objects, and were then expreſſed in ſtrains of the ſublimeſt language.

But, Sir, we differ widely from you, 1. In your ſaying that the predictions of the prophets were "not to any diſtant future time," p. 55. Iſaiah's predictions of *Cyrus* building, or forwarding the building of Jeruſalem, chap. xliv. 28. could not be leſs, according to your own account, p. 44, than 150 years from the prophet's death; and of the virgin's Son *Jeſus*, or *Emmanuel*, between ſeven and eight hundred years. This I aſſert here, but I *aſſert* it, do remember! from the bible; and from the bible, I ſhall *prove* it in another place.

2. That the moderns, not the ancients, honoured thoſe men, or conſidered them in any reſpectful light, page 55. Here, Sir, you are totally wrong, for it is ſolely to them we are indebted, next to God himſelf, for thoſe precious writings of the prophets; and it is from the judgment they paſſed upon thoſe men and thoſe writings, together with the gradual accompliſhment of the predictions in their proper time, and the excellencies and ſuitableneſs of the ſcriptures, each riſing generation diſcovered, that thoſe men and thoſe books have been ſo long

in such great repute, by the wisest and best of men; and so many bright and illustrious characters have stood up their willing votaries, and bold defenders, both among the ancients and moderns, and would reflect the greatest honour on any nation or any age.

3. To believe you we must suppose that those men lived *only* to oppose each other, page 55. There was indeed a necessity for the true prophets to oppose the false; as much so as for believers, to oppose infidels; the lovers of the bible, those who revile it. Seeing false prophets as much opposed the honour of God, and interests of men, in their day, as modern Deists do in ours.

4. That "all had immediate reference to themselves," p. 55. in their predictions. What immediate reference had Jeremiah's prediction of deliverance from captivity seventy years from that time; or the overthrow of Babylon to him, an old man, and a favourite of that court?

Now, let all men in their senses bear witness, what crude indigested stuff, what self-evident falsehoods you palm upon the world. I leave all your banter and poor low wit to yourself and party, as they are great helps at a non-plus, without which I know not what you would do; real friends to God, to truth, to man, have better weapons; they have the scriptures---the bible, and to this you are equally bound to abide by with us, from what you have over and over declared, or eat your own words. Now you must prove from that book, we are wrong, and also from it your assertions are true, ere we give up, which you have yet *no where* done; or if we prove from the bible you are wrong, and your assertion false; that book to be true, and we right, which, I appeal to candour, has all along been done, you must, Sir, give up, or find yourself ranked, not by the rash, hasty, inconsiderate, but by the most dispassionate and judicious, I was almost going to say by Deists themselves, among those, with whom you name the prophets, page 53. I am really loath to follow your example, but for once feel the weight of your own weapons, even, Sir, among "impostors and liars."

You ſeem much inclined to give credit to Ezekiel and Daniel, p. 57, but to obviate the great and weighty truths they declare, you endeavour to make it appear, that with the loſs of their liberty, their ſenſes were almoſt gone, and yet they retained in their "reveries," a love for their country, religion, and laws; and you *wiſely* add, "Had the numerous commentators and prieſts, who have fooliſhly employed or waſted their time in pretending to expound and unriddle thoſe books, been carried into captivity, it would greatly have improved their intellects," p. 58. A very high compliment, though undeſigned, to thoſe men and their work. But in anſwer to many things you ſay in two or three pages here, I have to obſerve,

1. As to the myſteries and mode of writing in thoſe prophecies, they are agreeable to the beautiful variety God diſcovers in carrying on his great deſigns, and the revelation of his will and ways, amongſt men. *God*, ſays the bible, *at ſundry times, and in divers manners, ſpake in time paſt unto the fathers by the prophets.* But it ſeems, unleſs heaven keep a kind of monotony in the manifeſtations of his pleaſure and deſigns to his creatures, ſome men are ſo diſguſted as to ſtick at nothing to render them ridiculous, and unleſs they can circumſcribe the Deſty to act within the circle of their own capacities and caprice, there is hardly a name too bad to be affixed to his ſervants and proceedings.

2. Whatever ſtate thoſe men were in, it plainly appears they had a country, religion, and laws; and what that country and religious ſyſtem were, we clearly learn from the frequent mention made of them in the moſt undiſguiſed and obvious manner, Jeruſalem, and the temple worſhip. How do your conceſſions here alſo, admit of Moſes and his law in the fulleſt ſenſe that any lover of the bible can wiſh for?

3. You ſeem to forget yourſelf, which indeed, Sir, is nothing new with you, when you talk of the reſtraint thoſe men were under, which was the cauſe of them uſing ſuch dark and myſterious phraſes in their writings, &c. Had they been galley ſlaves, or in the *Lux-*

embourge, where it would really appear you had formed your ideas of them and their condition, your ſtatement would have ſome colour of truth; but pray how much like a "priſoner of war" did *the third ruler in the kingdom* look? How much like a "ſtate priſoner" did the man appear to whom the king himſelf paid divine honours? Whatever reſtraints you may fancy, from the gloom of your priſon, theſe men laboured under in writing, it is plain to all the world they were under none in ſpeaking and acting. But,

4. Their predictions ſpake for themſelves then, and how they have ſpoken ſince in the various ages of the world, for God, for the bible, and for the prophets, let the different monarchies in their riſe and exit, determine. Call you the predictions what you pleaſe, they have the majority of nations as their interpreters, and the greateſt number of men in the world to prove their fulfilment ſo far, and their exact fulfilment, ſome ſooner, ſome later, but all in due order, as the prophets ſaw and promulgated. Are you not weary yet in oppoſing ſuch clear proofs of the truth of ſcripture? Yea, ſo clear in only theſe two prophets, that if there were a thouſand miſtakes in the other parts of the bible, yet, thank heaven, there is not *one*, there is here, I think, enough to ſtrike deaf and dumb every enemy to revelation and the book of God. Indeed, Sir, without a flouriſh, every ſtep you take to detect the fallacy of the bible, and expoſe its writers, tends only to involve yourſelf in greater ſhame than what your aim is to expoſe them to; and more and more ſubſtantiates the truth of that book, it appears your glory to vilify.

You cannot but know that the judgment upon Egypt, which you take notice of at the 11th verſe of the 29th chapter of Ezekiel, p. 60, is an hyperbolical figure of ſpeech, common in poetical writings, and the bible; indicative of ſevere afflictions, &c. on part of that kingdom, as is ſpecified at the 10th verſe, which you ſeem not to have looked at, *from the tower of Syene even unto the border of Ethiopia*.

At the 62th page, having paſſed over in ſilence ſeveral

of the other prophets, you pitch upon *Jonah* as a ſubject of much ridicule and great mirth; here you run on at great length, blending truth with falſehood in your uſual way, doing all your humorous fancy helps you in to make a little ſport for your votaries; but as you do not deny, or bring any thing from ſcripture to prove the falſity of the ſacred ſtory, I ſhall beg leave to withdraw from the ſcene of ſuch daring indignity to God and truth, leaving you and your companions to enjoy your mirth---but, remember there is a day of reckoning.

"Here now," ſays Mr Paine, page 64, "remain only a few books, which they call the books of the leſſer prophets, and as I have already ſhewn that the greater are impoſtors, it would be cowardice to diſturb the repoſe of the little ones." It is perhaps wiſdom in you too to let them reſt, becauſe you would not find that advantage in all, you did in one of the leaſt of them, you juſt now made bold to call from his repoſe. Beſides, the fear of a Philiſtine may poſſeſs you, apprehenſive, that a little David may do more execution than a great Goliah. But you go on, ſame page,

"I have now gone thro' the bible, as a man would go through a wood, with an axe on his ſhoulder, and fell trees. Here they lie," &c. Here comes the finiſhing with a witneſs! Regardleſs of the little impropriety of ſpeech, I haſten to addreſs the feller. A word with you Mr *Woodman* ere we part. 1. I own a congruity here, God's ſervants are often compared to trees. But,

2. By whoſe appointment did you enter the "*wood?*"

3. For *what* did you enter the wood? To cut down every tree, or only ſome? If the firſt, you are an unfaithful ſervant, for ſome you have left ſtanding according to your own account; if the laſt, who *marked* them off for you? The *owner* or a *ſtranger?* If the former, why let them ſtand ſo long, take ſuch delight in, ſpeak ſo honourably of, and do ſuch great things for, and great things by them, as myriads of millions can witneſs, for near 4000 years, and ſtill as fertile as ever, and all at once to deliver them over to your courſe cutting axe? This, I confeſs, puzzles me more than the moſt abſtruſe

point in all the book of myſteries, even heightened with all the art of aggravated malice, and all the rancour of refined ſpleen——But here I acknowledge myſelf a ſceptic, as great a one on this head, as Mr P. is with regard to the bible. If the latter, a ſtranger, you know your *name*, you know your *crime*. *He that entereth not by the door, I am the Door*, ſays the great Maſter, *is a thief and a robber*. Hear then your *deſtiny*. *Whoſo ſhall offend one of theſe little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millſtone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the ſea*. But really, Sir, though this is awful, yet I think as to your having felled theſe trees, you are *actually* in little danger from that quarter. Whatever you may have done *intentionally*, I know not, but in *fact* you will, I conceive, be found leſs guilty than you ſeem to wiſh. You ſay, "I have gone through the bible, as a man would go through a wood" to "fell trees. Here they lie." Is it ſo indeed? Truly there appeared as if an enemy had been in the encloſure, but as to the trees themſelves, we found and left them ſtanding; yet let us look again. Here freſh and fair ſtands *Moſes* by the teſtimony of increaſing evidence. *Joſhua* and *Samuel*, remain firmly rooted as at firſt. *Ruth* and *Eſther*, the woodman we own, has treated with little truth and leſs civility, but the blaſts of calumny fell none of God's trees, and therefore theſe ſtand firm. With regard to *Ezra* and *Nehemiah*, the axe haſtily applied, miſſed its aim, and rebounding, wounded the woodman's head; ſo theſe eſcaped, and ſtand like trees in ſummer, clad in all their blooming honours. Hail ye oaks of Baſhan, ye glory of the foreſt! flouriſh for ever! *Job*, *David*, and *Solomon* are found unmoved. *Iſaiah*, *Jeremiah*, *Ezekiel*, and *Daniel*, continue all in their ſtation; a few ſcratches, it muſt be allowed, appear upon the bark of ſome of them, but no inciſion; a little time, a ſummer or two, and they will not be known. The reſt of the trees remain untouched, one excepted, with whoſe bruſh-wood the feller has made a little noiſe, but the tree itſelf re-

mains entire. Brave woodman! with the laſt you made quick diſpatch; half ſcores at once, and that without a blow, was wonderful!

But Mr Feller, a word or two more. You muſt know, it is not enough to enter the foreſt, view the trees, exclaim againſt their age, and ſcratch their bark, or pluck their hoary honours off, and then cry, "Here they lie!" Their owner and their friends cry, "Here they *ſtand!*" and joy to ſee them. Yes, ye choice cedars, ye glory of creation! let the bramble decry you, or the woodman inſult you; He, by whoſe hand you were planted, and by whoſe power you have ſtood, ſpeaks, *No feller* ſhall *come up againſt* you, and *no weapon that is formed againſt* you *ſhall proſper*. Happily for us, ſuch only clean you of your hurtful moſſes, or clear you of encumberances, which, from length of time, and tranſplantations into various ſoils and climates (languages and tongues) you could not but contract! And ſtill you are the trees reared in Paleſtine, flouriſhing in Europe; exotics once, now natives of the ſoil.

Fear not then, O men, to take ſhelter under their covert. Come, take, confidently take, the advantagesof their umbrage, and eat their pleaſant fruit. Here are the richeſt of dainties, here is food for ſouls. *See, taſte, determine* for yourſelves!——we wiſh no more.

The NEW TESTAMENT.

I ſhould think I offered an inſult to God, to truth, and common ſenſe, did I follow you through all your impious buffoonery in the New Teſtament, any more than in the Old; for the further you go, the more daringly bold and foolhardy you appear, as if faſt filling up the meaſure of your iniquity; but I ſhall endeavour to meet you on the principal and moſt material parts.

"The New Teſtament, they tell us," ſay you, p. 64, "is founded upon the prophecies of the Old; if ſo, it muſt follow the fate of its foundation." All this is true,

and certainly they muſt, and will, ſtand or fall together. However, from what is paſt, we have a fair proſpect of the ſtability of both.

Page 65, you ſay " It is not then the exiſtence or non-exiſtence, of the perſons" meaning Joſeph, Mary and Jeſus, " that I trouble myſelf about; it is the fable of Jeſus Chriſt, as it is told in the New Teſtament, againſt which I contend." Here then there is no denying our Redeemer as to his actual exiſtence, &c. but " the fable" the things told of him, You ſubjoin " the ſtory taking it as it is told, is blaſphemouſly obſcene." No, Sir, in the account itſelf is the greateſt modeſty; and I cannot help obſerving, *Unto the pure, all things are pure; but unto them that are defiled, and unbelieving, is nothing pure; but even their mind, and conſcience is defiled.*

But let us now enquire into the " fable," as you term it, or the things that are related reſpecting our Saviour, and ſee whether you are not with De Foe *, baſely making a " fable" of truth.

Let it be remembered, that the deſcriptions of Jeſus Chriſt as to his conception, perſon, doctrines, &c. were not things haſtily propagated, or received at random, as the report of the day, or the wonder of a moment. No; they had been the talk, the hope, and expectation of the wiſeſt and beſt of men for thouſands of years, particularly among the Jews, and eſpecially for about ſeven or eight hundred years, till the happy æra arrived which uſhered in among men the Lord of Glory in their own nature.

It was predicted in the prophets, whoſe authenticity I truſt is eſtabliſhed on the broadeſt baſis, and ſureſt foundation, that there ſhould a remarkable perſon deſcend from Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob; who ſhould be born in Bethlehem, of a virgin of the family of David, in the time of the ſecond temple's ſtanding, mean in circumſtances, and introduced by a forerunner, ſhould be eminent for piety, wiſdom, and benevolence; wonder-

* The writer of Robinſon Cruſoe

ful in the actions of his life; ſhould be rejected of the Jews, put to death ignominiouſly, and riſe the third day. Great calamities to come upon the Jews ſoon after, and truth to ſpread among the Gentiles, &c. &c. That theſe things were accompliſhed at the time, place and manner in the perſon called Jeſus Chriſt, we have nations and hiſtories to record, eſpecially Jews and the *New Teſtament*, where theſe things are detailed; the ſubject of which, whilſt the aſtoniſhment of angels, and the joy of good men, becomes the object of your ſatire and ridicule. However, Sir, this is the Virgin's Son, in whom we glory, not your fancied one, p. 46. which carries abſurdity groſsly abſurd in the very face of it, our Redeemer and Emmanuel, God with man, Matth. i. 23. The true Meſſiah, John iv. 25. Concerning whom and his doctrines, wherever named and moſt attended to, inſtead of being "ſtained with blood," unleſs that of his own and beſt friends, "and marked with deſolation," p. 45, excepting by enemies, every place in Chriſtendom---the whole world, has perpetual cauſe of joy in both, for it is there, and there only, man lives every way like man.

I have conſidered your account of things for ſome pages, and diſorder, obſcenity, falſe reaſoning, and blaſphemy, the rankeſt I ever met with, apart, the moſt material of your objections, if I miſtake not, conſiſt of contradiction, and deficiency of repetition, theſe I ſhall attend to. But,

1. I deny the concluſion of your "poſition," p. 66. for two genealogical accounts of one perſon may not agree in all things, and yet be both true. 2. I deny your aſſertion, by implication, ſame page, that Matthew and Luke "contradict each other in every particular," for they ſet off and end together; which you ſeem aware of, page 67, diſcovering what a ſtrange and uncandid reaſoner you are. If you were to talk ſo as a witneſs in any court of judicature, your evidence would paſs for nothing, unleſs it were to help you for an hour or two to the pillory.

We have in Matthew the genealogy of Chriſt by his

ſuppoſed father Joſeph from David; which, to the believers of bible hiſtory, will appear very ſatisfactory, as it is the account given of the lineal deſcent of the Kings of Judah, as recorded in the Books of King sand Chronicles.

As to your ſtory of old batchelors, page 69, it is like the moſt you ſay, the effects of your inattention. One would think the vapour of your pen affected your intellects, you are ſo apt to run into abſurdities, and ſo prone to give truth the lie. Solomon was not David's eldeſt ſon, as would need to be the caſe according to your reaſoning. No, he muſt have been the ſon of his old age. *You* ſay Solomon died at the age of 58, page 42, and the *bible* ſays he reigned 40 years, 1 Kings xi. 42. He muſt then have been only about 18 when his father, carrying the marks of old age more than moſt we read of, left him the throne.

Now, Sir, you who are ſo fond of denouncing and condemning the bible as contradictory, &c. how muſt you appear when plain matters of fact, with your own ſignature, meet you full in the face, *proving* you to be, what you *ſay* others are? If you ſet off with ſo barefaced a violation of truth, daſhing away to expoſe others, whilſt every flouriſh proclaims your own ſhame, how many are you likely to make before you reach the end? I leave you and your friends to reckon.

By Luke we have the genealogy of Mary the mother of Jeſus down from David.

It is very ſingular, that after you have argued matters as the work of two men, for four or five pages, you come, as in p. 69, to ſay, "The firſt queſtion, however, upon the books," &c. "*Doubtfulneſs*," then all you *have* ſaid, and *now* ſay, or *will* ſay, if you are to be believed in any thing, *has been*, and *is*, and *will* be in doubt. We muſt examine this, for your adding by way of come off, "The ſtate therefore, that the books are in," doubtful, "proves againſt themſelves, as far as this kind of proof can go," is nothing; for it certainly muſt prove as much *for*, as it can *againſt* them.

You add, p. 70, "The preſumption is, that the books ſaid to be written by Matthew, &c. are impoſi-

tions." And " The diſordered ſtate of the hiſtory in theſe four books, the ſilence of one book upon matters related in the other, and the diſagreement that is to be found among them, implies, that they are the production of ſome unconnected individuals," &c. I cannot help obſerving what ſeems apparent, *doubt* hinders you believing truth, *preſumption* leads you to ſuch daring impiety as blazons almoſt every page of your divinity; and *implication* helps you to pervert the right. But,

1. As to " the diſordered ſtate of the hiſtory," &c. In anſwer to this, let it be remembered, this is not a hiſtory of kings, or their actions, but an account of a few individuals, little noticed, and little known but among themſelves; nowiſe ambitious of honour or regard; the beginning of a novel ſyſtem, and a new ſect, who without much erudition, ſimply relate matters among themſelves, leaving others to judge of them, as they found thoſe things and their lives to accord.

Thus four different perſons, having ſome knowledge of the prophets, compiled, ſeparately at different times the annals of that æra, which commenced with the fulfilment of the ancient prophecies, and the appearance of the long-expected *Shiloh*, or *Meſſiah*. Convinced of the truth of theſe things themſelves, as eye and ear witneſſes, and having the whole nation as ſpectators, they well knew they had only to mention ſome particulars for the conviction and gaining of the conſent of the candid, leaving the truth of their ſimple unadorned narratives to win its way, by the power of that ſpirit with which they were enabled to collect and publiſh thoſe things, into their yielding minds. Knowing that facts, however ſelf-evident, and enriched with all the gracefulneſs of language, would avail nothing without the power of God. And thus they, without ſtanding upon the nice punctilios of intervening circumſtances, reported and ſet down what each believed was likely to do moſt good. Hear the men themſelves. Matt. chap. i. v. 1, &c. Mark i. 1. Luke, conſcious of the truth, dedicated his goſpel to one apparently in an eminent ſtation, chapter i. ver. 1, &c. 1 John, chap. i. ver. 1, &c.

I make no apology for uſing ſcripture, 1. Becauſe it was agreed on, and I acceded to it. 2. Mr Paine quotes ſcripture in *doubt*, to force it to ſpeak againſt the bible; I quote ſcripture in *confidence*, knowing that it is fully ſufficient to ſupport the bible.

2. "The ſilence of one book upon matters related in the other," is another objection. This to me appears a mark of heaven's interpoſition, in the matter as well as manner; that amidſt ſo much to be ſaid, every one ſhould ſeparately add his part to the ſacred ſtock. How deficient of thought and common ſenſe muſt a man be, who expects not deficiencies in the ſhort account of an evangeliſt, reſpecting what another had ſaid before him, when he was inclined and aſſiſted to *gather up* only, as it were, *the fragments* of a ſubject ſo multifarious, and concerning a perſon of whom one of themſelves has ſaid, however diſtant they have kept from each other in that ſenſe, *And there are alſo many other things which Jeſus did, the which if they ſhould be written every one, I ſuppoſe*, a ſtrong hyberbole, *that even the world itſelf could not contain the books that ſhould be written*, John, chap. xxi. 25. But,

3. "The diſagreement that is to be found among them," &c. This is a weighty objection if true; but it is a comfort to think, its foundation is *doubtfulneſs*, p. 69. Let us examine this charge a little. The apparent diſagreement of Matthew and Luke, in the genealogical account of our Redeemer, has been greatly objected to, but I truſt ſufficiently cleared up.

Your next complaint on this head, p. 70, is concerning the annunciation of the angel, &c. you ſay Matthew informs us that it was to Joſeph, and Luke to Mary. Examining the paſſages, Matth. chap. i. ver. 18, &c. Luke i. 26, &c. which you might juſtly fear looking at, and of courſe neglect ſetting down, there appears the greateſt congruity; and if you would but look attentively in the firſt chapter of St Luke, you would ſee other witneſſes beſides Joſeph and Mary, to this uncommon event.

You next find fault with the ſtory of Herod deſtroy-

ing the children, p. 70, and ſay, it " belongs altogether to the writer of the book of Matthew ; and not one of the reſt mentions any thing about it." In anſwer to this and to all ſuch frivolous objections, it was enough that *one* of them mentioned it. You alſo ſeem to forget that the journey of Jeſus Chriſt fulfilled a prophecy ; and that the infant John lived ſecurely diſtant from the ſcene of cruelty.

You, in p. 71, attack the evangeliſts reſpecting the manner of wording the inſcription put upon the croſs. " Not any two of theſe writers agree," ſay you, " in reciting, *exactly the ſame words*." However, all the *four* exactly agree in declaring, 1. That the illuſtrious ſufferer was a *King*. And, 2. That He was *King of the Jews*, which even unbelief itſelf cannot but admit, was ſufficient for the confirmation of all that had been predicted of the Meſſiah, and all that Jeſus had ſaid of himſelf.

The account of the crucifixion is ſufficiently clear with all its concomitants, after all you ſay, p. 72, &c. to every reaſonable mind, if but properly attended to, as related by the four Evangeliſts. Here we have ſet before us in emblems and figures, the Jewiſh ceremonies aboliſhed ; a new way made to the holy of holies, and the reſurrection of the body, yea, life and immortality brought to light, to day light, thus by Jeſus Chriſt, Hebrews, chap. x. verſe 1, &c. &c. I really pity this gentleman, he is ſo much obliged to walk in trammels. He dares not look beyond the limits of a few detached ſcriptures, fully conſiſtent all circumſtances attended to, nor ſtir beyond the precincts of his own commentaries. Indeed, I know not what he would do, were it not for the friſks of his own pen, with which he now and then amuſes himſelf a little. If the belief of the bible hampered its votaries, as much as the unbelief of it does its enemies, I ſhould not wonder at Mr P. riſing as a man fond of liberty, to extricate his enſlaved fellow creatures ; but when they are walking at large, with proſpects the moſt extenſive, and expectations the moſt flattering, he daringly to invade their territories, and deceitfully at-

tempting to inſnare and lead them blindfold to the gloomy manſion of deiſm, where all is "*doubt*" and uncertainty, how ſhould he be ſhunned, and his maxims deteſted? Inſenſible muſt that man be to his own prerogatives, and the mind to its immortal powers and privileges, tamely to ſubmit to his ſhackles, or to be bound in ſuch fetters.

You ſay, page 73, "The writer of the book of Matthew ſhould have told us," &c. No, it was enough to relate it for the pious to believe; it was enough being related, if but by one, for the Jews and enemies living to deny. But this was a talk, none then near there, if any, any where elſe, was foolhardy enough to undertake. No, it is much eaſier at this diſtance of time and place, to "doubt," and turn into ridicule, than it would then have been, or indeed *now* is, to *prove* thoſe things falſe. Nor would more, even entering into the indecent, unbecoming minutia, and ribaldry double diſtilled, of Mr Paine, have been enough to have ſatisfied an infidel. Beſides, according to this, there are innumerable objections to the bible. Let me juſt mention one or two to help you out.

We are no where told what kind of a well Jacob's was, whether a common ſpring or a draw well; whether it was ſurrounded with brick or ſtone, or whether it had any wall round it at all; nor any intimation, if ſurrounded, where abouts the entrance was, whether north or ſouth; or whether they had ſteps to go up, or ſteps to go down to the water.---In the account of the wounded traveller, Luke x. what deficiencies? not one word is ſaid of the hoſt, whether a Jew or a Gentile, a tall man or a ſhort. Nor of the houſe, whether built of ſtone or timber; whether it had windows or wanted them; and what a help to fix the æra of glaſs-making, had we been only informed whether they were glazed or not? but not one word is ſaid of theſe things, nay, nor even of the ſign, whether the King's Head, or the Shears and Bodkin.

You add, "Had it been Moſes," &c. ſame page, who had returned "not an unconverted Jew had remained," &c. Hold, Sir, your ſenſe runs too faſt for

your reaſon, and your ſuppoſition, for matters of fact. *And there appeared*, once upon a time, *Moſes and Elias*, ſay eye witneſſes, but who were converted by it? And what effect upon unbelievers and infidels, had the reſtoration of the widow's ſon from death, though done before multitudes? Or the reſurrection of Lazarus, in open day? It is well known the latter raiſed the jealouſies of the ſcribes, &c. and rouſed their malice into action againſt the gracious author, who has well obſerved, in his word, *If they hear not Moſes and the prophets, neither will they be perſuaded, though one roſe from the dead.*

With regard to the reſurrection, you do not deny, nor attempt to deny it, only you ſay, p. 74, "The writers, whoever they were, diſagree ſo much, as to make it evident that none of them were there." Well, but that is no proof againſt it. The few detached parts, a word here, and a ſentence there, you have picked out, prove nothing againſt the account, but taken as they ſtand, and all circumſtances conſidered, they moſt clearly eſtabliſh the truths recorded; and every way, by a variety of incontrovertible evidences and things, ſupport, and confirm the divine miſſion of theſe men, and the important matters they relate.

The expreſſion uſed by St Matthew, "*Until this day*," p. 76, which you make as an argument to prove that he did not write the book that bears his name, ſhews your inattention. It ſhould be remembered, that St Matthew is ſuppoſed to have written his goſpel about Anno 39, ſix years after theſe matters happened. It might well ſurpriſe the man of God, that ſuch a barefaced falſehood, amidſt ſo many witneſſes to the contrary, ſhould have ſo long prevailed among this deluded people, and extorted the ſentence with wonder, "*Until this day!*"

"The abſurdity alſo of the ſtory is worth noticing," you ſay, p. 76, that is, the ſtory which was propagated to invalidate the truth of our Lord's reſurrection, Matt. xxviii. 11, 12, &c. I join iſſue with you here, only you will remember that St Matthew does not ſay the

ſoldiers deſcribed the " manner and perſons" in particular, but ſuited their ſtory to their ſubject; and as to the " abſurdity" of it, forget not, that it is part of deiſm, and all the conſequent honours of it, deiſts are welcome to.

" I come now," ſay you, p. 76, " to that part of the evidence in thoſe books, that reſpects the pretended appearance of Chriſt after his pretended reſurrection." Here you drive faſt through the four Evangeliſts, and move a little quicker than you will allow our Redeemer to have done, if ſeven miles and a half took him up a whole day to walk, p. 78. Here I ſhall follow you a little cloſer, and examine more minutely than the laſt, the evidence you bring to invalidate this part of the ſacred hiſtory, becauſe on proving or overturning this, great things depend.

I ſee nothing impracticable, taking it in the ſtricteſt ſenſe, in our Lord meeting his apoſtles on the day he roſe, at a mountain of Galilee, Matt. ch. xxviii. 7. 10, 16. 17. ſeeing ſome parts of that province were not far from Jeruſalem, according to ſome; and his attending two of the diſciples in their journey to Emmaus, which Mark takes notice of, chap. xvi. 12; and Luke relates more fully, chap. xxiv. 15, &c. In the mean time his apoſtles might return, and Jeſus give them the meeting at Jeruſalem in the evening, after leaving the diſciples at Emmaus, John, chap. xx. 19; there was time enough without taking in the ſpeed of ſpirits to the account; for after he had retired, the two diſciples reſolving to return, ſet off and reached in time the well-known houſe of reſort, perhaps the place where our Redeemer had eaten the paſſover with them before his death; reciprocally to give and ſhare information and joy on the ſolemnly pleaſing occaſion of their Lord's being reſtored to life; where, while they were relating their late adventure to the eleven, Jeſus entered the room, Luke xxiv. 33, 36, 37, &c.

Thus, I humbly conceive, all thoſe difficulties and contradictions, p. 76, 77, &c. are vaniſhed quite, and the goſpels ſtill honourably hold their place, and the

moſt eſſential truths are eſtabliſhed on the moſt permanent foundation. So that the contradictions, &c. with which the Evangeliſts are charged, and for which they are ſo illiberally treated by you, Sir, are not to be found with them, but only where they ever have been, in the ideas of bad men, and in bad books.

You ſay, p. 78, " As to the account of Chriſt being ſeen by more than five hundred at once, it is only Paul who ſays it, and not the five hundred," &c. We admit that he ſaid it, and what a challenge was this to all the world of enemies? but we want proof that the five hundred did not ſay it. If they had not, and could prove the apoſtle was wrong, as the moſt of them, alluded to, were then living, why did they not do it? But this is a very unfair way of arguing---but what are we to expect? any thing to help out a bad cauſe, and to invalidate evidence deadly to deiſm.

" I come now," you add page 79, " to the laſt ſcene, that of the aſcenſion into heaven, which, if true, was to ſeal the whole, and ought to have been as public as the crucifixion," &c. The proofs of the aſcenſion as to the time, place, and manner, were not ſo eſſential as thoſe of the crucifixion and reſurrection; nor could they be ſo clear, becauſe in the one, man was the chief agent, and in the other, the Redeemer's preſence, ſome where or other, to ſome one or other, in the houſe, mountain, &c. were ſo many ſtrengthening evidences of the reſurrection, which in this were all wanting. But,

1. There are witneſſes ſufficient to prove it to the ſatisfaction of reaſonable men; the teſtimony of thoſe who had been preſent, and both ſaw and heard, Mark xvi. 14---19.

2. It proved itſelf by the conſequent promiſes being fulfilled; the gift of tongues; the help afforded the apoſtles to accompliſh wonders in working miracles, and humanizing men, Theſe are ſuch ſelf-evident facts, with incontrovertible proofs down to our own day, that I ſhould really think myſelf as well employed in proving Mr Paine's *Age of Reaſon* to be a printed book, or that the ſun is in the firmament, as to ſpend time in proving

the aſcenſion of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, ſeeing there is beſides, the teſtimony of angels to confirm it. Acts c. i. 1 to 14.

Page 80 you ſay " I have now gone through the examination of the four books aſcribed to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John," believing it " impoſſible to find in any ſtory (alluding to the reſurrection) upon record, ſo many, and ſuch glaring abſurdities, contradictions, and falſehoods, as are in thoſe books;" and ſeem convinced " that the bible and teſtament are impoſition upon the world;---that the fall of man, the account of Jeſus Chriſt being the ſon of God, and of his dying to appeaſe the wrath of God, and of ſalvation by that ſtrange means, are all fabulous inventions, diſhonourable to the wiſdom and power of the Almighty;---that the only true religion is deiſm, the belief of one God, and an imitation of his moral character, upon this I reſted all my hopes of happineſs hereafter. So I ſay now—and ſo help me God."

The " contradictions," &c. Mr P. ſpeaks of, ariſe ſolely from his miſunderſtanding of, and miſapplying what is written, as we have already ſeen, when the books are ſuffered to ſpeak for themſelves, and of courſe, can only increaſe with the ſtrength of prejudice againſt facts, and hatred of the plaineſt truths.

As to the " bible," &c. being an impoſition; when man wanted help and could not procure it, it was an excuſeable obtruſion to force a kindneſs upon him he did not merit, and could not expect. It is ſurely a bearable badge of bondage to be laid under the preſſure of an obligation for which we had nothing to give, and without which we muſt have lived in darkneſs, and died in doubt.

As to " the fall of man," being " fabulous," we have only to recur to your account of the prophets and Evangeliſts to prove that diſagreeable truth; for it is impoſſible to admit of the goodneſs, wiſdom, and purity of God, and at the ſame time allow that theſe murderous, lying, impudent, ſilly characters are the perfect work of his holy hands. You are again caught in your own net. You muſt either admit of the fall, or give up the wiſ-

dom of God; either deny the badneſs of Moſes, &c. and the Evangeliſts, or retract what you have ſaid—which you pleaſe.

If the fall be proveable, the recovery is an abſolute conſequent; and what could ſatisfy infinite juſtice, but an infinite ſacrifice? and where ſhall that be found but in the Infinite? and how ſhould it be brought about but by the Infinite becoming, as far as could be, finite to accompliſh it? Here again we ſalute the virgin's Son; the Wonderful, Counſellor; the mighty, or ſtrong God; the Babe born in Bethlehem; who, and accompliſhing which, inſtead of being "diſhonourable to," is the very "wiſdom and power of the Almighty," and will, of all his works, reflect the greateſt glory on Him to all eternity.

"True religion is deiſm." Pray, Sir, where would you have been informed of the principles, worthy notice, of deiſm, without the bible? Where can you learn the being, virtues, pleaſure and will of God, ſo fully as there? I really wiſh to know, for wherever it is, I am conſcious, if to any clearneſs, it will coincide, not claſh, with that precious book. But you appear ſomething like thoſe let into a ſecret, who when well acquainted with all its parts, deſpiſe the inſtructor, and ridicule the inſtructions.

You reſt "all your hopes of happineſs hereafter on the belief of one GOD, and practice of moral virtues." I preſume, not, Sir, to force my creed upon you, but, I do confeſs, I durſt not venture my happineſs hereafter on ſo apparently ſandy a foundation. I take not upon me to call in queſtion your morals; but, Sir, if they are to be judged of from your writings, and the treatment you offer Moſes, the other Prophets, Jeſus Chriſt and his Apoſtles, the deciſion, I expect, will be very little in your favour. How well you imitate the moral virtues of God there, needs no great degree of penetration to diſcover. Indeed, Sir, I am ſhocked to hear a man talk of his imitation of God's moral character, who has gone ſuch lengths in degrading by the moſt infamous means, his fellow creatures, if the bible was but common hiſtory, and broken almoſt every tie that binds ſociety.

If, Sir, your writings are a tranſcript of your mind, how unhappy muſt your ſtate be? and in this condition your paſſions wrought up to the utmoſt degree of uncertain phrenſy, in the dreadful dilemma to quiet the clamours of your uneaſy conſcience, you adopt the laſt great deciſive of an unhappy apoſtate, whom you yourſelf in another place cenſure on the ſame account, and awfully ſwear to all! p. 80. I heſitate not a moment, Sir, to tell you, you are every way deceived. Your truſt will come to nothing. *The hypocrite's hope ſhall periſh; whoſe hope ſhall be cut off, and whoſe truſt ſhall be a ſpider's web.* Your next refuge muſt be Atheiſm, the laſt reſource of erring minds. But would you, Sir, eſcape, and indeed imitate God's "moral virtues," haſten to learn how of the deſpiſed Nazarene, and of thoſe who thought it their greateſt glory to make him the ſubject of their predictions, and the object of their love, adoration, and obedience, the prophets and apoſtles.

"But to return to the ſubject," ſay you, page 80, What ſubject? Why, the goſpels. Well, but you ſaid you had gone "through the examination," &c. If you chuſe to run backward and forward, I ſhall not follow you, nor need I, for the moſt material things you have advanced for two or three pages, I have conſidered; only it ſeems ſtrange that you will have the four evangeliſts to be reſolved on lying, and yet not allow them ſenſe to conſult how to lie to the beſt advantage. I ſee you ſometimes diſcover the ſnare before you are caught in it.

Page 83, you ſay, "Thoſe who are not much acquainted with eccleſiaſtical hiſtory may ſuppoſe, that the book called the N. Teſtament has exiſted ever ſince the time of Jeſus Chriſt." The truth, doctrines, and writings that compoſe it, have been ever ſince, or ſoon after, but they were not collected and put into ſuch order, as we find them, till ſome years after. The firſt thing the apoſtles did after the day of Pentecoſt, according to divine appointment, was to go and preach every where, to gather a church and people together. When this was done, to edify the ſociety, and to inform riſing poſterity, and to have a guide and ſtandard in doctrine, ordinances,

and diſcipline, to miniſters and people in time to come, the evangeliſts, it is believed, were deſired to write an account of thoſe things they themſelves were eye-witneſſes of concerning Jeſus Chriſt, &c. which they did, in different parts and at different times, the account of each writer bearing his own name, not 300 years or more, as you ſay in this page, which I ſhall more fully conſider by and by, but it is ſuppoſed St Matthew's was written about ſix years after our Lord's aſcenſion---St Mark's about eleven—St Luke's twenty-two—and St John's about ſixty-four years after that time.

" Diſputes ran high," you ſay, page 84, " among the people then" about the year 350, " calling themſelves Chriſtians." What then? So they *now* do, both " as to points of doctrine," and " the authenticity of the" goſpels; and ſo they ſtill will, while there are men living whoſe faith and practice are oppoſed by thoſe books. As to " the conteſt between the perſons called St Auguſtine and Fauſte about the year 400" page 84. What is that to the purpoſe? What have you to do with them? Neither of their names is in the bible; you have promiſed to keep to that book over and over, and to confute itſelf, *only* with itſelf. But pray who is *Fauſte?* An oppoſer of the truth.

No wonder ſuch a man called thoſe books " tales, forgeries, and lies," p. 85, ſeeing they ſo much claſhed with his views. Theſe are the *beſt*, the *only* arguments and proofs, bible-haters have, againſt that ſacred volume.

As to your evidence againſt the bible from *Boulanger*, page 86, in his life of St Paul, they are alſo contrary to your promiſes, you have again and again declared, as I have ſhewn, you would uſe no other proof againſt, but what you found in, the bible. " I will not go out of the bible for proof," &c. ſay you, p. 18. But who is this *Boulanger?* And what the proof he brings? an enemy to the bible.

Who are his evidences? The rankeſt of heretics; the Marcioniſts, the followers of *Marcion*, who lived in the beginning of the ſecond century; who being excommu-

nicated by his own father for his wickedneſs, took umbrage at the ſtrictneſs of goſpel diſcipline, and the faithfulneſs of the orthodox, and ſet up for himſelf. He denied the real birth, incarnation, and paſſion of Jeſus Chriſt, and held them to be apparent only. He denied the reſurrection of the body, rejected the law and the prophets, but admitted the goſpel of St Luke, excepting the two firſt chapters; and likewiſe the epiſtles of St Paul, with ſome alterations.

"The Manichtions, who formed," ſays your friend, "a very numerous ſect at the commencement of Chriſtianity." Their tenets were ſomething ſimilar to the Marcioniſts.

"The Ebioniſts, or Nazarenes, who were the firſt Chriſtians, rejected all the epiſtles of St Paul," &c. But your companion forgot to tell us they received the goſpel of St Matthew, though in other reſpects very erroneous, denying the divinity of Jeſus Chriſt, &c. How true did Mr Paine ſpeak when he ſaid, page 18, "Falſe teſtimony is good againſt itſelf?" How do theſe prove, 1. The authenticity and antiquity of the New Teſtament as we have it, and in that the truth of the Old?

2. How do theſe contradict Mr Paine in aſſerting, page 83, "There was no ſuch book as the New Teſtament till more than 300 years after Chriſt?" Such evidence from enemies is very valid, and the moſt incontrovertible. Theſe as much prove the exiſtance of the New Teſtament with its doctrines, &c. in thoſe ages, as Mr Paine's *Age of Reaſon*, proves the bible exiſting in our day.

The ſcorn and contempt you again expreſs to Moſes and Jeſus Chriſt, to the old and new part of the bible, page 87, &c. I paſs over, being but a repetition of your uſual bitter invectives againſt truth and its authors, and come to "The Epiſtles of Paul," page 89.

You appear rather inclined to favour them, but "The character of Paul," ſay you, "has in it a great deal of violence and fanaticiſm," &c. page 90. Are you ſure of that? Perhaps ſome would have ſubſtituted the

word *zeal* for " violence ;" and for the word " fanaticiſm."---What is fanaticiſm? It is a ſcare-crow, dreſſed up by prieſts, to frighten mankind from the field of the goſpel, and which deiſts uſe againſt the truth. It is the cant-word of the day, and means generally from the mouth of a prieſt, or the pen of an infidel, what the word leveller on certain occaſions means. It is a ſtop-gap, a great help in a lame argument ; it frequently rounds off a period, both from the pulpit and preſs, with neither ſenſe nor reaſon in it, to the aſtoniſhment of multitudes. But, fanaticiſm, and if Mr Paine does not know it, " it is civility," returning the compliment, " to inform" him, is, 1. To look for an end without a mean. 2. Joying in an uncertain good. Than which nothing can be more contrary to the bible, to Paul and to his friends.

Your arguments on St Paul's reaſoning on the reſurrection, page 90, &c. are groſsneſs in the lump.

I do not wonder at the bible reſurrection appearing ſo " gloomy" to you, 1. Becauſe your hopes of happineſs, though ratified by oath, page 80, are cut off by that book. 2. Becauſe your premiſes are ſo abſurd, and your concluſions ſo heavy ; and from theſe riſe thoſe mean ideas, preferring the enjoyment of a " ſnail" to that of an immortal mind, capable of pleaſure ariſing from communion and intercourſe with God ; or even the gaudy wings of a " butterfly," to a pure ſpirit, ſwifter than lightning, and brighter than the ſun.

" Sometimes Paul affects," you ſay, page 93 " to be a naturaliſt, and to prove his ſyſtem of reſurrection from the principles of vegitation. " *Thou fool*," ſays he, " *That which thou ſoweſt is not quickened, except it die.*" " To which," you ſubjoin, " one might reply in his own language, Thou fool, Paul, that which thou ſoweſt is not quickened, except it die *not*." I apprehend he has, however, the beſt of the argument of you here alſo. Grain *does* die. What is death? A tranſmutation, a changing from one ſtate to another ; juſt ſo in this vegetable death ; the grain *muſt* die, tranſmute, change, or it will never produce its kind. Death is not cor-

ruption, it is, generally ſpeaking, corruption's predeceſſor, or parent. The germ, or ſubſtance of the grain riſes from the ſhell or huſk, like the ſoul at death from the body, bearing pure, living, proper grain, as will the immortal body riſe at laſt from death. But, ſay you, page 94, "The grain that dies in the ground never does nor can vegetate." You ſhould have ſaid, *rots*, or *periſhes*, in the ground, &c. And you add, "The living grains only produce the next crop." The living grains, properly, *are* the next crop.

But you endeavour to help the apoſtle next paragraph, ſaying, "The progreſs of an animal, from one ſtate of being to another, as from a worm to a butterfly, applies to the caſe," &c. Is it ſo, Sir? Does not a worm imply matter in motion, or an animated being? What difference there is between that and ſcattered, quieſcent duſt, needs no great ſagacity to tell. Had you, with ſubmiſſion, ſaid, The progreſs of an animal, as from a dormant chryſalis to a butterfly applies to the caſe, you would have ſpoken nearer the truth, and leſs like what you call the apoſtle.

Here I ſhall take notice of a note of yours concerning Paul, page 86, and though it is contrary to your promiſes, yet I ſhall indulge you in this alſo, and at the ſame time make my own uſe of it. "The Ebioniſts, or Nazarenes, who were the firſt Chriſtians, rejected all the epiſtles of Paul, and regarded him as an impoſtor; was originally a pagan; that he came to Jeruſalem, where he lived ſometime; and that having a mind to marry the daughter of the high-prieſt, he cauſed himſelf to be circumciſed; but that not being able to obtain her, he quarrelled with the Jews, and wrote againſt circumciſion, againſt the obſervation of the ſabbath, and againſt all the legal ordinances." The uſe I make is,

1. If the *firſt* Chriſtians, whether right or wrong is another matter, rejected the epiſtles of St Paul, it is plain to a demonſtration they muſt have been written then.

2. Allowing him to have been a pagan, your friend ſays, he wrote againſt the Jewiſh ceremonies.

3. He was at Jeruſalem whilſt a Jewiſh high-prieſt was there to get his daughter, which could not be after the temple was deſtroyed, and that was about forty years after our Lord's aſcenſion.

Now Sir, from this teſtimony you muſt,

1. Either ſhew us other writings of St Paul, with equal proofs, againſt the Moſaic ceremonies, beſides what we have, or you muſt admit of them. And if you admit of them you muſt admit of the doctrines of the goſpel, yea, the truth of the Old and New Teſtaments, Heb. i. 1. & ii, 3, 4.

2. You muſt either diſcard your auxiliary and his teſtimony, or admit of the antiquity and truth of the New Teſtament, as ſtated in itſelf and by its friends, whichever you think proper.

" I here," ſay you, page 95, " cloſe the ſubject on the Old Teſtaments and the New. The evidence I have produced, to prove them forgeries is extracted from the books themſelves." Only part ſo, however. " And acts like a two-edged ſword," &c. That is true, but it turns out, unhappily for you, to the deſtroying your endeavours to overturn the bible, and more abundantly to clear up and confirm, I appeal to matters of fact, the whole truth of that moſt bleſſed book.

If in the paſt part you have hewn and cut down the bible, here, and to the end you ſeem greatly afraid of its coming to life again, and being troubleſome, for you fall upon it like a freſh man, but with old weapons.

" The contradictory impoſſibilities," ſay you, p. 95, " contained in the Old Teſtament and New, put them in the caſe of a man who ſwears *for* and *againſt*." And ſuch a one I believe we need not go far to find. I have to obſerve your apparent contradictions have been met and ſolved.

Muſt it not add weight, and validity to ſcripture teſtimony, that, though written at ſuch a diſtance of time, when language wascramped, and ſcience imperfect; by various perſons, in different periods and ages of the world, it can be proved after all Mr Paine ſays, to have leſs real contradiction in it, than the *Age of Reaſon*, re-

cently and on purpoſe written to diſcover the abſurdities in that book?

1. Mr Paine complains of repetition, page 33, and finds fault for want of it, page 70.

2. He promiſes over and over, page 6, 10, 18, not to go out of the bible for proof againſt it, and yet at p. 37, calls in to his help *Abenezra* and *Spinoſa*; at page 85, *Boulanger*; and heaps upon heaps p. 86.

3. With regard to the Pſalms, p. 40, he ſays, "The greater part relates to local circumſtances." In the ſame page he ſays, "The authors of the bible paid no regard to time, place, and circumſtances."

4. He exclaims, p. 64, "I have gone through the bible as a man through a wood, and fell trees. Here they lie." Now who would imagine that *eleven* out of four-and-twenty never had received a blow? Nay, but concerning whom he declares he would not "diſturb" them.

5. He ſays, p. 82, "There was no ſuch book as the New Teſtament till more than 300 years after Chriſt." And page 86, he expreſsly tells us that "at the *commencement* of Chriſtianity, *the New Teſtament* was *rejected as falſe*."

I paſs over many more ſuch contradictions open as day, nor ſhall I puſh my advantage of this here, but ſimply aſk, which is moſt worthy of credit, the Old and New Teſtament, or the *Age of Reaſon?*

In the concluſion, page 97, Mr Paine ſays, "The moſt deteſtable wickedneſs, the moſt horrid cruelties, and the greateſt miſeries, that have afflicted the human race, have had their origin in this thing called revelation, or revealed religion." That is the bible. "It has been the moſt diſhonourable belief againſt the character of the Divinity, the moſt deſtructive to morality, and the peace and happineſs of man, that ever was propagated ſince man began to exiſt." &c. Theſe are heavy charges, but it muſt give pleaſure to every lover of the bible to find that they are only charges, and that the bittereſt of its enemies can go no further. The moſt prominent of this gentleman's former objections have been already conſidered, and we ſhall now attend to theſe a little.

Was the bible a book newly made, or lately imported, and offered us as a rule for our faith and manners; or was it kept up as the Sibylline oracles of old, only to be looked at on certain occasions, or even as it once was, prohibited by popish priests, and the people forbidden to read it; Mr Paine's exaggerated account might pass as true, and himself be considered as great a friend to his fellow-creatures for his timely information of the dangers consequent on receiving that Book, as we now cannot but consider him an enemy both to God and man. It is impossible to read his account without wondering that there can be a man so lost to himself in fear or self-love, who dares to represent a book in such a manner, which treats so much of the Being, Power, Justice, Wisdom, Works and Goodness of God, even if he could not receive all its doctrines. But to this gentleman, the judgments of God upon his enemies, are subjects of his daring murmurs, and impious complaints; and the gracious acts of his kindness, are matters of satire and ridicule, and are lost in the sink of a mind apparently dead to gratitude and all the finer feelings.

How are we affected, for instance, when alive to the sweet emotions of sympathy, when we read of the fidelity of a *Pythias* to preserve his friend, or a *Curtius* to save his country; or, to come to things of a more recent date, of that illustrious Frenchman *Eustace de St Pierre*, with his companions of immortal memory, who to save their fellow citizens, hastened to put on the garb of guilt, and the rope of criminality, and fled to meet death at the feet of the invader of their country, I say how are we struck on reading these, and such like accounts, when in the possession of sensations that do honour to human nature, and, though nowise interested, how readily do we offer our tribute of applause to such generous characters! Yet, what are these, or ten thousand times more, to what the bible tells us God has done for man? When we read of the indignities man has offered God, and at the same time of his obligations to him, one would be ready to think that an enmity would have taken place, which nothing could irradicate. But

inſtead of that, to the aſtoniſhment of heaven and earth, HE contrives and effects their deliverance; kindly keeping alive the memory of his mercy in mercies, means and men, till the glorious appearance of the Meſſiah the Virgin's Son, yes, Sir, the Virgin's Son, the Serpent-bruiſer. We again joy to hail THEE, O DESIRE OF NATIONS! and delight to own Thee in each ſhape and name. But, loſt in the amazing magnitude of thy love and ſufferings, how ſhall we expreſs the debt we owe Thee!

"The bible teaches us rapine, cruelty, and murders." Gracious heaven, where are we! was ever a man ſo loſt to decency, ſenſe and reaſon! Was ever a man ſo much at variance with himſelf, with God, or man, as this? Had you ſaid the bible is full of indignity, ſorrow, and grief to God on account of man, it had been nearer the truth. If nations or individuals ſuffered, it was for their rebellion, and in righteouſneſs towards God and others; but, as if determined to exceed depravity, and outdo in offering an inſult to heaven, theſe you commiſerate, and the ſorrows of innocence you deride. The illuſtrious Deliver of mankind, is the object of your banter, ſcorn and contempt. Sir, I am implicated, and my ſpecies, in the inſults you have offered the Son of Mary, the Son of God. What ſhall be done?---HE hath ſet us an example, He bears with and ſpares you, nor will we, though we muſt oppoſe you, ceaſe, amidſt your unprovoked revilings, to pray for and pity you.

The bible is the "origin of the moſt deteſtable wickedneſs, the moſt horrid cruelties---deſtructive to morality, and the peace and happineſs of man." O monſtrous perverſion of reaſon and truth! You here impeach my judgment, and that of the bulk of Europe for ages. You inſinuate here, that in believing and approving of the bible, I am an abettor, with all ſuch, of thoſe dreadful evils, and an enemy to God and man. I have examined your evidences, but find them weak, contradictory, and falſe, every way unworthy receiving by any who has the ſmalleſt grain of ſenſe to riſk. Now having done with evidence, you fall to declaiming. But, Sir, though I

confeſs you are an adept in this art; yet, as ſcorn an deriſion are no great marks of genius, and are generally the laſt auxiliaries called out to help in a bad cauſe; and as banter can bring no conviction to a candid enquirer, your efforts I truſt will prove abortive here alſo. But you ſay "the bible of creation is inexhauſtible in texts," page 106. If we look at the bible itſelf, and compare it with matters of fact we ſee and know, it will appear quite a different book from what you repreſent it, and full of the cleareſt texts.

Where are ſufficient rules for ſociety made plain? Among the *ſtars?*

Where is mercy to an enemy diſcoverable in precept and practice? Among the *trees?*

Where are the moſt uſeful things to man unfolded? In the *water?*

Where diſcover our ſoul's excellency and worth? Among the *fowls* of *heaven*, or the *fiſhes* of the *ſea?*

Where learn our duty to our Maker? Among the *clods* of the *valley?*

Where look for inſtructions to ſet us right if wrong? Among the *ſhrubs* of the *forceſt*, or in the *graſs* of the *field?*

Where find a ſtimulus to virtue? In the *beauties* of the *tulip*, or in the *ſcent* of the *roſe?*

Theſe are the leaves of Mr Paine's bible, but we want a teacher. If he can himſelf read here, he ſhould be civil to thoſe who cannot; and if he will not read in our bible now, let him not deſtroy it, for I dare divine, it was at leaſt his horn-book at firſt, and that it was there he began his "a b, ab," in the alphabet of creation; if it was not by this he roſe, if riſen he is, to utter the wonderous ſounds of "hic, hæc, hoc," in this complex language, where there are ſo many letters with four feet.

Leſs tedious, more certain, and more pleaſant is the bible, though to many full of myſteries; but the cauſe may be in themſelves. It is well known that all men have not equal powers or abilities; many have not capacities ſufficient to take in enough of the myſteries of

a common handicraft buſineſs, to get bread and clothing by. Thouſands are loſt in the depths of philoſophy, and loſt to ſociety, who, had they known how to have carried themſelves, might have been uſeful members of the community. But in the profundity of revelation, in its brightneſs, beauties, uſefulneſs, connection, and fulneſs; in its author, doctrines, duties, and privileges, thouſands and myriads are bewildered, from the falſe ideas they form, and wrong principles they ſet out upon. They think all God's reaſons of conduct ſhould be known, and bear an analogy with their own; and that the great Author of nature ſhould be every way as explicable in his being, attributes, word, and ways, as if he was their menial ſervant. The contents of the bible muſt be as intelligible to their capacities, however imperfect, as a common problem in Euclid is to a learned mathematician. They muſt fathom its divine depths by the ſuperficial line of their circumſcribed capacities, or they flout, they ſpurn, they ſcoff, they rail---become deiſts, laugh at all revelation, and lampoon and deride all who have leſs confidence of their own parts, and more confidence in God. It is poſſible, I own, by declamation only, to puzzle the moſt ſelf-evident axiom in philoſophy, mathematics, or divinity; by this, the plaineſt truths may appear clouded, as the faireſt character may lie under ſtrong ſuſpicion by malicious reports, or baſe inuendoes. But if Mr Paine thinks that his ſarcaſms and ridicule are ſufficent to overturn truth with thinking men, he will find himſelf miſtaken. They may do with thoſe who wiſh, and whoſe intereſt it is, that the bible may be falſe; but his artillery is too light, and too ill ſerved to demoliſh the good man's fortreſs, deſtroy the believer's citadel, or overthrow the bulwark and outpoſts of the Deity. For, firm as their great Author, the ſcriptures have ſtood, not only the ſhock of time uninjured, but the united attacks of devils and bad men in every age, without harm. Precious truths! peculiar is your ſituation; Satan and Deiſts would not have you *believed;* Papiſts would not have you *read;* and many Proteſtant prieſts would not have

you *experienced*, and are as great enemies to your *power*, as either of the others is to your *forms* and *contents*. But its divine author ſays, "*It ſhall accompliſh that which I pleaſe.*"

Man's curioſity and benefit naturally lead him to enquire after things paſt, preſent and to come. God, condeſcending to indulge him, has given him in the bible the beſt account and moſt agreeable to his ſituation and nature. God there unfolds to man his own exiſtance, and hence, *that* he is, is an object of my faith, not *how* he is. Juſt ſo all the myſteries of the Trinity, in all the perſons, offices, and characters; together with every thing we cannot ſee, or our ſenſes perceive, but which are made known to us for our inſtruction, help, and comfort, and which will prove ſo, if our pride and unbelief do not hinder; to which we ſhould the more readily accede, ſince the deſcriptions in the bible are ſo conſiſtent to every thing in nature we have any acqaintance with. The things paſſing among us with which we are daily converſant, are the accounts of the bible ſubſtantiated, as far as the parts we live in can bear a ſemblance. Were we in the eaſt, our eyes would more fully ſee, our ears hear, and our hands handle, the truth of the ſcriptures. The fragments of Babylon, &c. and the deſolations in Paleſtine—yea the archives of an enemy to the Chriſtian faith would overturn all Mr P.'s arguments againſt, and unite in ſupport of bible hiſtory.

Our very paſſions and appetites, bear witneſs to the truth of the ſacred records; ſo that if we had no bible, if we formed ideas conſiſtent with our ſtate, we ſhould juſt think as we now do. Such congruity and harmony are there in the works, word, and ways of God, above us, ſo far as we know; beneath and around us, ſo far as we can diſcover; and within us, ſo far as we feel. Theſe things are a tranſcript of the bible, which that book kindly helps us to underſtand. So that in fact, a man muſt deny his ſenſes, and do extreme violence to the powers of his body and mind, before he can give up the bible.

Thus, whilſt this bleſſed book informs us of a God, his attributes, &c. it diſcovers to us how to pleaſe him and be happy. Mr Paine ſays it is " deſtructive to the peace and happineſs of man;" and fair ſtand the maxims of a heathen, for the well-being of ſociety, in compariſon of the bible. See p. 99, Note. Let us examine.

Conſider we man as a member of the community, as an accountable, immortal creature, where ſhall he find directions ſo ſuitable to him as in the bible? View him as a citizen in the capacity of a magiſtrate. What inſtructions! Exod. xxii. chap. Deut. i. 17, xvii. 14, &c. and xxiv. 17. In ſhort, That juſtice might be every way adminiſtered, every man's rights enjoyed, the afflicted find comfort and the neceſſitous relief, ſeem to be the great end of the ſacred code. Even how the pooreſt may ſleep in ſafety and eaſe, engages the attention of God himſelf, Exod. xxii. 22, 27. Hear further his concern expreſſed, *He kept him*, his people as one, *as the apple of his eye*. What are the maxims of Solon's ſyſtem in *theory*, when compared to thoſe of the bible's in *practice?* God reſented the indignities offered his people, from even the grandees of the earth, *He reproved kings for their ſakes, ſaying, Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm*. Theſe, Sir, were *doing* ten hundred years before Solon *ſpake*, and recorded near to five hundred years before he exiſted; and towards perſons too, ſome of whom you even prefer the company of devils to, page 97. Perhaps it may not always be the caſe. But further, *He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of his eye. The very hairs of your head are all numbered*. Theſe are the " maxims" of a book Mr Paine calls " horrid," " deteſtable," " impious," " ſhocking," " deſtructive to morality, and the peace and happineſs of man." It may be ſo, but it can only be ſuch a one as Mr Paine.

Conſider we man ſtill in a judicial capacity. Are coercive meaſures neceſſary, and muſt ſome ſuffer to deter others? If you follow the bible you mix mercy with judgment, and forty ſtripes at moſt ſhall bound the pu-

niſhment, Deut. xxv. 3. What are theſe to the hundreds, with ninefold vengeance, inflicted on delinquents in ſome ſtates?

Does juſtice demand the life? Life for life, &c. but without adding indignity and carrying reſentment beyond death, Deut. xxi. 22, 23.

How congenial are the maxims of the bible to man in an inferior ſtation? *Be ſubject to the higher powers*, &c. Rule and order there muſt be, and every member is bound to keep and help them forward. Look at him as a father, maſter, huſband, their oppoſites and concomitants; what counſel is needed that is not given? As a neighbour, what clear information how to proceed with friend or enemy? What a guide is the bible in things *civil, ſocial, and religious?* To a man's *end* and *hopes*, if worthy a human breaſt, and the dignity of man? How clear, explicit, plain, and encouraging, from God's juſtice being ſatisfied in Jeſus Chriſt, and grace and mercy procured for all who want, and all who come, allowing things to be as ſtated in the ſcriptures? and we have as good a right to believe this ſide of the queſtion as the other, and of two difficulties, one of which we are under the neceſſity of adopting, it is an allowed maxim we ought to chuſe the leaſt. If there is a God, we can run no riſk in following the bible, becauſe we embrace it as his word from conviction, it being the moſt congenial to our views of Him in perfection of excellency, benignity, truth and righteouſneſs, as diſcovered in his works, and felt in our own boſoms in the happieſt moments of retirement, and ſerious devotion.——And if there is no God, there will be, of courſe, no danger in attending to it; and deriving all the comfort we can get, in this chequered ſtate, from its pleaſing doctrines, and cheering proſpects, to all its willing votaries, here and hereafter; which riſe far too high above, to be the productions of the human mind unaſſiſted by heaven, and could only originate with God himſelf.

Under theſe impreſſions, and with ſuch comfortable ſenſations, faithful miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt, may joy-

fully enter their pulpits, and freely, and boldly publiſh to accountable, immortal man, the ſacred records, and all the precious truths contained in the bible; and under the Divine Auſpices, be as inſtrumental in doing good, winning ſouls, and building up the church of God now, as holy men in times paſt have been, in humanizing mankind, and ſaving ſouls from death;---- amidſt oppoſition, both from men and devils.

I am aſtoniſhed at your intimating, page 97, "That Chriſtianity was eſtabliſhed by the ſword;" and that you ſhould draw ſuch uncharitable inferences concerning the whole, from the indiſcreet forwardneſs of one of the body. And I wonder, Sir, you do not ſee that the exerted power of Jeſus in inſtantly healing the wound of an enemy, muſt more than compenſate for the haſty act of a ſervant, jealous for the ſafety of a much loved, injured, and inſulted Maſter. But, you add, page 98, "It is then falſe to ſay, that Chriſtianity was not eſtabliſhed by the ſword." Indeed, Sir, it is far more to ſay it was. You muſt forget of what you are ſpeaking, and to whom you are alluding. Had it been the compilation of the ſtate maxims of a tyrant, or a ſyſtem of mere human polity, ſuch a meaſure as you ſpeak of would have been neceſſary, and moſt effectual to the enforcing of the belief and obſervance of the ſame. But what human aid did HE ſtand in need of to enforce his will, to whom *all power in heaven and in earth* inherently belonged? Jeſus gives you to underſtand, if you would but read and believe, had oppoſition been his deſign, or earthly glory and dignity his view, what reſources he had in his own hands, mean as he appeared, to accompliſh ſuch purpoſes. *My kingdom is not*, ſays he, *of this world*, &c. and that *more than twelve legions of angels*, he tells us, Matth. xxvi. 53, were ever ready at his call. If you would know what he ſingly could accompliſh, ſee him with his little whip of cords, *terrible as an army with banners*, driving multitudes from their ſtations, with their tables and their treaſures, where they were driving a trade, the gain of which, we may

ſuppoſe, was dear to them as their lives. Behold him alſo, diſpoſſeſſing legions at a word, one of whom, if but commiſſioned, could have ſlain ſcores of thouſands in a night.

Again, Sir, learn the power of him againſt whom you contend, in his ſtriking to the ground the hordes that came out to ſeize him, with the ſingle, ſoul-ſtunning, I AM HE! *Kiſs* then, Sir, *the Son leſt he be angry and* you *periſh, when his wrath is kindled but a little.*

But further, How often did Chriſt ſhew and expreſs himſelf diametrically oppoſite to ſuch meaſures; and, excepting once, I think, all his lifetime, againſt the uſe of ſuch weapons? And what he ſaid to his forward ſervant, *Peter*, on the above occaſion, clearly evinces that, and ſhould ſerve as a warning to all who handle that inſtrument, how they uſe it. *Put up again thy ſword into his place; for all they that take the ſword, ſhall periſh with the ſword.* Poor encouragement this at the off-ſet, for thoſe, who, according to you, were to fight their way through the world; and who, inſtead of warm arguments, were about to uſe cold iron to enforce their doctrines, and to eſtabliſh their principles. But, no, Sir, Jeſus came not to take away, but to give, life, both ſpiritual and eternal; and in recommending even theſe, to deal with men as free agents; and if any have uſed harſher means for that purpoſe, they have as far miſſed their way as you have the truth, in declaring the above.

You aſk, p. 98, "What is it that we have learned from this pretended thing called revealed religion?" I anſwer, every thing that can do honour to, and embelliſh human nature in every character. In this, by the aid of the ſame ſpirit which aſſiſted the writers, and which is equally needed *now*, as at firſt, to underſtand the ſame, men clearly learn their duty to God; the great end of their creation, and of all the creatures about them. This is a comment upon God, upon his works, and upon man to man; expreſſive of his duty,

intereſt and happineſs. It is here man contemplates God, and learns man. This is the mirror that reflects or ſhews God in all his excellencies, and the creatures in all their uſes. It was from this the latent principles of man were firſt ſtirred into action, and have been ever ſince unfolding and expanding themſelves. By this men learned to form ſociety, frame laws, found arts and ſciences, the fitteſt for man, and the moſt conſiſtent with his ſtate, and beneficial to his exiſtence; and the moſt congenial to all the ideas, and active, and extenſive powers of his immortal mind. It is a directory to every thing great and uſeful; a guide to virtue, and a ſtimulus to all good.

Your talk, Sir, about the "bible of creation" ſeparate from this, is a perfect burleſque upon mankind. It is like giving a Hebrew bible, or a Greek Teſtament to an infant to read a chapter in, who knows neither the figure of letters nor the ſenſe of ſounds Take the bible away, and I know no ſituation in life ſo dreary as that of the Chriſtians; no ſcience in the world ſo defective as that of divinity. For traverſing ſeas and exploring deſerts, heaven has ſent the friendly loadſtone. It would be little encouragement for the bewildered traveller, without his maps and compaſs, to bid him look at the fields and firmament; or ſmall ſatisfaction to the mariner, far from land, with neither chart nor compaſs, to tell him he was ſafe, if he would only look at the ſea and ſkies; adding, Here are the beauties of creation; here are the wonders of the Lord. Both true, but ill-timed; they have an end to accompliſh, which talking ſo helps them little in. They have a great charge, and their all is at ſtake; and ſhould they look till their eyes became fixt as the orbs they gazed at, they would be no nearer effecting their purpoſe. It would prove like the painful taſk, the precious book ſo pointedly ſpeaks of, in its uſual ſtrain of beautiful figure, when detailing the fruitleſs labour of inconſiderate man, under the judicial puniſhment of heaven for his indifference and ſin; Iſaiah, chap, xxix. 11, 12. If men had

not a better guide to heaven than the book of nature, they might gaze upon the beauties of creation, and ſtare at the ſtars till they dropped into hell. Theology, the moſt important ſcience, would, without the bible, become the moſt uncertain in the world. Yea, take the bible away, and you offer an inſult to all ſcience, as much ſo, as to language, in deſtroying the alphabet of every tongue. It is there we find in embryo, in miniature, the moſt noble and uſeful ſciences, in the whole world. What! when arts, in all their perfections are flouriſhing on every hand, muſt religion be ſtripped of its only help---its all, the bible? Take away the bible, and you leave men without a check upon their paſſions and appetites. Take away the bible, and you lay the encloſure of ſociety open without a fence, without an hedge. Take away the bible, and you leave the world without a ſun; all would become darkneſs and uncertainty. He then of all enemies is the greateſt to the preſent race, but above all to coming generations of men, who ſtrives to wreſt the bible from our hands.

To ſum up all, what is it we learn from all that has been ſaid?

1. What we ſet off with, viz. that "Thomas Paine underſtands not" the bible. 2. That he is as liable to make blunders and miſtakes, as thoſe whoſe blunders he hunts after in the bible. 3. That he can lampoon, and that if he has any merit, it is in the art of falſe colouring, and deceptive ridicule; in theſe he appears perfectly ſkilful; perverting the truth, and proſtituting good parts in a bad cauſe. 4. We learn that as times, ſtates, and circumſtances changed, ſucceeding generations needed the ſame help to know and pleaſe God by revelation, as others. 5. That God, ever mindful of his creatures, raiſed up men as guides to virtue and happineſs in ſucceſſion, equally qualified to help forward his work, and each in his day added, as heaven pleaſed, his ſtone to the ſpiritual fabric, in writing and compiling the bible, till it arrived at the perfection in which we find it. 6. That the aid of the ſame ſpirit is ſtill

neceſſary for to help us to underſtand and practiſe the bible, that at firſt indited, and helped holy men to write, and has ſince aſſiſted paſt ages to attend to it.

But ſome may ſay, we ought to be careful what interpolations we admit of in the bible, leſt we come not to know what is really original. True; but remember, 1. *All* are originals to us. 2. Holy and inſpired men ſuch as *Joſhua*, *Samual*, *Ezra*, &c. are conſidered as the compilers of the bible. 3. That with all theſe emendations for connecting and accommodating different things and times, the bible was thus when our Lord ſo often quoted and recommended it. 4. When the Apoſtles wrote, and tranſcribed ſo much of, and ſo frequently alluded to it.

Let us then, 1. Read and take delight in the bible. 2. Live it ſo far as we know, and pray for the accompliſhment of it in ourſelves, and in the world. 3. Conſider what it has been and ſtill is, a friend, a light, a guide; ſure, clear, and faithful. What ſituation are thoſe nations in, that are deprived of the free uſe of the bible? Bordering on a ſtate of barbariſm.

What were our own forefathers, when, under the deſpotic dominion of Monks, this book was ſuppreſſed? Degraded to almoſt a level with the beaſt, both in mind and circumſtances. What opened their eyes to ſee as men, and to claim and regain their invaded rights, both in a civil and religious ſenſe? The "book of Nature"? ---Deiſm?---No! The BIBLE --That Book of books. Say *Britain*, what has raiſed thee to hold the predominance in the ſcale of empires, and exalted thy ſons to the higheſt ſtation in poliſhed ſociety? The neglect and contempt, or the ſtudy of, and attention to the bible and its ſacred maxims?———To the honour of this bleſſed book, the nation, the pariſh, the family---the individual, is the moſt accompliſhed, the wiſeſt, and the happieſt of any, in erudition, ſcience, and ſociety, in all their branches, where the bible is beſt known, and moſt attended to. 4. Conſider how its predictions have been accompliſhed? Say, ye monarchies, ye nations----ye

Jews, eſpecially, ye choſen of God, to chronicle to men in aftertimes, His ways on earth! 5. How have theſe *times* been ſpoken of? It is in that book we are forewarned of theſe *men* and their *errors*. *Now the Spirit ſpeaketh expreſsly, that in the latter times ſome ſhall depart from the faith, giving head to ſeducing Spirits, and doctrines of devils*, 1 Timothy iv. 1. *Who ſhall bring in damnable heriſies, even denying the Lord that bought them. And many ſhall follow their pernicious ways; by reaſon of whom the way of truth ſhall be evil ſpoken of.* 2. Pet. ii. 1, 2. *Beloved, remember ye the words which were ſpoken before of the apoſtles of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; How that they told you there ſhould be mockers in the laſt time.* Jude ver. 17, 18.——— And were there not ſuch, it would militate more againſt bible hiſtory and truth, than all that Mr Paine has ſaid or can ſay againſt the ſcriptures. Laſtly, let us cultivate an acquaintance with this book, and its divine Author; and order our conduct and converſation according to its precious rules, and patiently wait the iſſue; for as by the bible ſucceeding generations have been warned, taught, and encouraged, ſo by it, at laſt, will the fate of all men be fully and finally determined.

FINIS.